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Saturday  
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Britain's newspaper  
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# The Guardian

EUROPE

Plus six pages of weekend sport

Julia Langdon, page 9

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Blair and Ashdown lay trap for Lords

## Christmas is cancelled



### Ambush aims to destroy Hague plan

David Hencke  
Westminster Correspondent

**T**HE Government and Liberal Democrats are planning to wreck the Christmas of rebellious peers by ordering the House of Lords to sit from Boxing Day onwards to push through the contentious European Parliament Elections Bill. The plan, discussed at a meeting between ministers in the Lords and the Liberal Democrats, is aimed at destroying Tory leader William Hague's strategy to disrupt government legislation for the next year. The ambush is to be backed up by an emergency plan to create 50 new Labour and Liberal Democrat life peers in one day next January — if the Conservative hereditary peers continue to obstruct business. The idea for a Christmas ambush came after ministers were advised that they have the constitutional right to force the House of Lords to re-examine any legislation 13 months after a bill has passed its second reading in the Commons. The European Parliament Elections Bill received its second reading on November 25 last year — giving the Government the right to recall

the Lords on Boxing Day — even though it falls on a Saturday.

Most hereditary peers are unlikely to want to leave their country houses to turn up to debate the issue straight after Christmas. Normally, the Lords, like the Commons, has a three-week Christmas break and would not expect to be back until January 11.

Even Conservative life peers will not be keen on cancelling their Christmas arrangements, leaving Labour and Liberal Democrat peers with a majority to push the bill on to the statute book in time to hold next May's European Parliament elections on proportional representation.

One source said yesterday: "There is a strong feeling that as William Hague has decided to ignore precedent and used hereditary peers to reject the bill five times, there is no reason why the Government should stick to conventions either."

Yesterday Margaret Beckett, the Leader of the Commons, paved the way for the new confrontation by announcing that the bill will be reintroduced in the House of Commons next Wednesday, the earliest opportunity to bring it back.

She announced, during exchanges on coming parliamentary business, that the European Parliamentary Elections Bill would be

rushed through all its Commons stages next Wednesday on a "gullotine" timetable.

She said later: "Of course, there will be a proper opportunity for the House to consider the matter and come to a view, but any notion that the Conservative Party will be able to use the opportunity to discuss this to further prolong debate on this matter, I can assure you will not meet with a warm reception on this side."

The bill is set to have its Lords second reading before Christmas but peers could try to delay its committee stage for a fortnight — pushing discussion into the New Year. It is at this point that the Government could drag the peers back after Christmas, to force the bill through by the New Year.

The disclosure of the planned ambush comes as Conservative peers are planning a policy of "zero tolerance" against Tony Blair's government over what they call bad legislation.

A Conservative Central Office briefing document for the BBC and other TV media says: "We are sure the Lords will not obstruct legislation for the sake of it — but, in the face of an overbearing government, we would not be surprised if peers adopted a policy of 'zero tolerance' towards bad legislation. They would have our backing if they did."

A Conservative Party spokesman said yesterday that they would not cooperate with the Government over either the European Parliament elections Bill or House of Lords reform which he described as "constitutional vandalism".

He added: "We're not going to support a new House of Commons, people simply appointed by the patronage of the Prime Minister and the Labour Party."

## Turmoil at Barclays as bank chief quits

Golden handshake of £2.5m for chief executive who took on old guard in boardroom battles

Lisa Buckingham  
and Jill Tresson

**T**HE future of Barclays, one of Britain's biggest banking groups, was thrown into doubt yesterday with the shock resignation of its chief executive, Martin Taylor. The bank, which has 6 million customers, denied that a boardroom row was to blame for the departure of Mr Taylor, who is likely to be given a golden handshake of about £1 million plus windfall share option profits of more than £1.5 million. But the 46-year-old chief executive, who started his working life as a reporter for the Reuters news agency, had hinted earlier this year that he felt wearied by boardroom opposition.

Mr Taylor said from his south London home last night that he does not have a new position lined up. "My intention is to have a bit of a break," he said. As one of the first chief executives to be taken from outside one of the six families which

founded the banking empire, Mr Taylor had tried to pursue a radical strategy with mixed success. But he felt thwarted by the old guard at the bank and his frustration exploded at a board meeting on Thursday night and Barclays stunned the City with news of his immediate departure yesterday morning. By the end of the day £171 million had been wiped off the bank's worth, down 8 per cent.

Although senior executives denied the boardroom turmoil would leave Barclays vulnerable, City experts predicted Barclays and its 84,300 employees would be lucky to escape a takeover attempt. In a move to minimise the fall-out from Mr Taylor's departure, the bank persuaded its finance director, currently working out his notice period, to stay and shore up the boardroom. City regulators are certain to have told the crisis-hit bank that the chairman, Andrew Duxton, must have a clear successor before he being allowed to leave as scheduled next year.

Sir Peter Middleton, the deputy chairman and man who will take over from Mr Taylor



Martin Taylor... no new position lined up

temporarily, played down the increased possibility of a bid. Mr Taylor is thought to have held merger talks with the Halifax. Other big financial groups, such as Lloyds TSB, Prudential, Norwich Union, Abbey National and NatWest have been mentioned as possible predators. But Sir Peter said the chief executive had lost his enthusiasm, although he claimed there had been Herculean efforts by other board members to persuade him to stay. "It's a very wearing, grinding business where you face continual attrition," he said.

He denied Mr Taylor had met opposition, suggesting that the youthful chief executive had underestimated the scale of changing the entire Barclays culture.

Mr Taylor's decision to quit immediately clearly took his colleagues by surprise but he is thought to have his eyes on a change of direction. One director, Sir Nigel Mobbs, said: "Martin always advised us that this was a chapter in his career not his entire career."

Mr Taylor took up a government offer to head a task force looking at tax and benefits and is thought to want to expand his political involvement. He was responsible for devising the working family tax credit. Some have suggested Mr Taylor might be a candidate for Lord Mayor of London, while others see him possibly assuming the mantle of Adair Turner at the Confederation of British Industry.

The plight into which Mr Taylor's resignation had plunged the bank was reflected yesterday through-out the stock market, which was also plagued by nerves after the bank warned that its profits for this year would fall between £200 million and £500 million below expectations.

Taylor who could not cut it, page 12

If you bank with the Midland, you don't any more



Julia Finch

**T**HE 162-year-old name of Midland Bank is to disappear from the High Street.

The name is being axed by the HSBC Group, which bought the Midland in 1992, as part of a global re-branding exercise. By the end of 1999 every Midland branch fascia, sign and interior will be replaced by the HSBC name and its red and white hexagon logo.

Every cheque book, credit card, and stationery form, leaflet and letterhead will also be rebranded.

The Midland name is one of 16 international names within the HSBC group, including car loans company Forward Trust, which are being ditched in favour of a global corporate brand.

Last night HSBC estimated that the cost of the change worldwide would be \$20 million — without the cost of advertising the new name. Keith Whitson, chief executive of HSBC and former boss of the Midland said: "It's the most difficult decision we've had to make. Midland has done very well over the last few years. It's restored its reputation."

The bank is writing to customers over the weekend to inform them of the change and is starting an advertising campaign. This will be the third time the bank's image has been overhauled in five years.

In the wake of HSBC's takeover, the bank called in Fitch & Co, restaurant Terence Conran's former style advisers, which tried to give the traditional banking halls a trendy image with acres of steel and glass, distressed concrete exteriors and a sharp turn to page 2, column 4

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Dubai D 8.50			

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Youth powers to curb football hooliganism  
Police produce alcohol bans outside stadiums were unveiled by the Government yesterday.  
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**International**  
France has been forced to delve into its social conscience after 10 homeless people died of hypothermia, one of them outside a hospital.  
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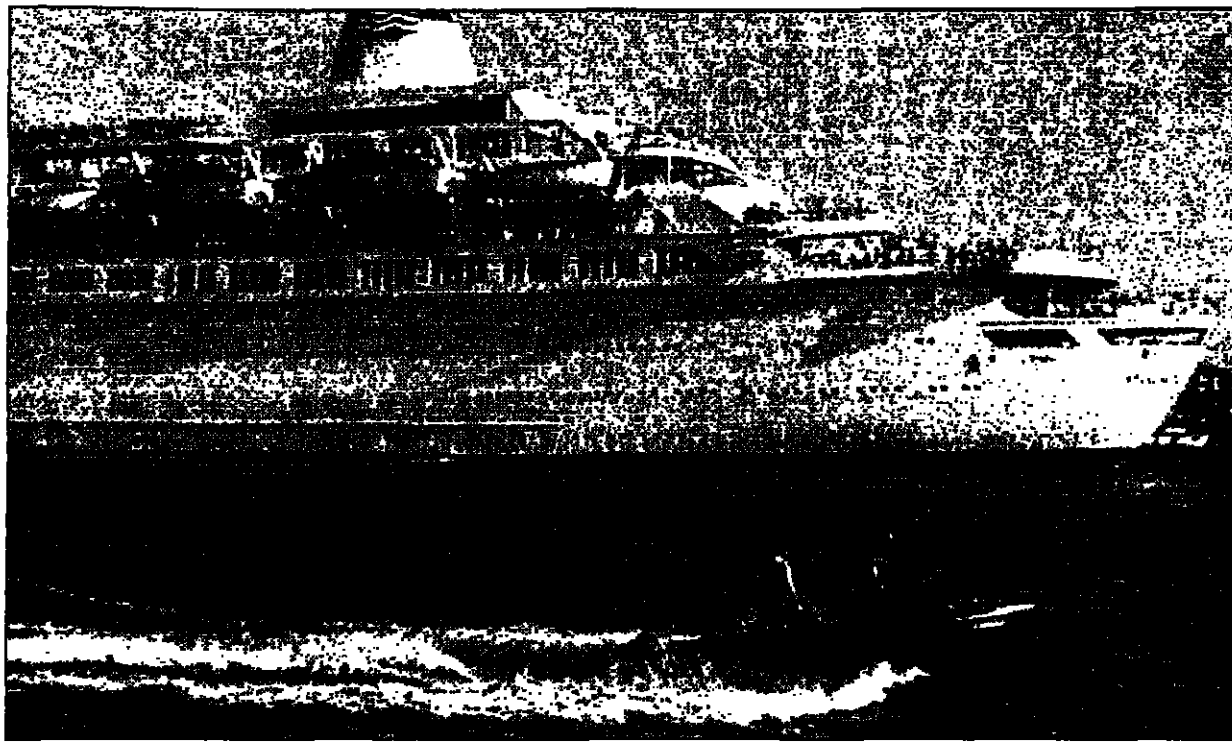
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Zurich	SF	218	382	703
Brussels	B.F.	4,370	7,640	14,080
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The Pacific Princess, now confined to port in Piraeus after crew were caught smuggling heroin. PHOTOGRAPH: YORAM KAHANA

## Cruise romance hits the rocks as Greece impounds Love Boat liner

Helena Smith in Athens

**T**he Love Boat, the liner that mythologised romance on the high seas and helped make modern cruising popular, has been impounded in Greece after the country's economic crime police snatched out heroin smugglers among its crew.

The Pacific Princess — famous as the setting for the American television series — was firmly moored in the port of Piraeus yesterday as the vessel's 6,000 passengers, most of them British, discovered that life on board is not always fun and frolics. In a dramatic plot twist, the Love Boat was last night put under heavy police surveillance.

Greek authorities barred the ship from leaving port after undercover agents — arrested two Filipino crew members as they pocketed \$9,000 (£5,500) in exchange for 3 kilograms of heroin handed to Nigerian drug dealers in the harbour. Further inspection of the vessel revealed another 22 kilograms stashed in staff cabins. The cache, brought in from Thailand, is estimated to have a street value of \$1.4 million.

"We acted on a police tip-off and conducted the operation as quickly as possible," said Spyros Stathis, the head of the port's economic crime squad, who ordered crack commands to search the 20,000-ton liner "with a fine tooth comb".

"It's a sorry fact that in Greece cruise ships are now used, big time, to traffic drugs. One of the crew members admitted having done this before," he said. The luxury liner — replaced by the larger Sun Princess for the recent re-launch of the television hit, Love Boat: The Next Wave — had docked at Piraeus after sailing from Turkey. It had been due to continue to Rhodes, Haifa in Israel and Alexandria in Egypt.

"It will be impounded here until the public prosecutor decides otherwise," Mr Stathis said. London's P&O steamship company, which owns the Princess Line, said lawyers would immediately apply for the order to be lifted, but the application will have to

go through Greek courts, which are notoriously slow. Passengers, who included newly-weds, had paid £1,345 for the two-week "Holy Land" cruise. They now face the prospect of viewing Piraeus's highly unromantic docks.

"We don't have any celebrity performers on board this time, but passengers can be sure they'll be well entertained," a P&O spokeswoman said. "They've got a choice of Broadway shows, cinema, circus acts, casinos and a spa and health centre."

The original (1973-86) hit was filmed both in Hollywood and on the ship — often with passengers playing extras — and is still being shown in 39 countries.

## Poles seek trial of Oxford don's wife

Neil Bowdler in Warsaw and Simon Bowers

**B**RTAIN yesterday faced a second embarrassing extradition dilemma after the Polish military prosecutor announced it would apply to Britain for the extradition of the wife of an Oxford don for her alleged role in the arrest and execution of a Polish wartime hero.

Helena Brus (née Wolinska), now aged 79, is accused of persecuting opponents of the puppet government in Warsaw. In her role as chief military prosecutor of the wartime post-war communist regime.

She is wanted in connection with charges concerning the arrest and prosecution of General Emil Fiedor, a former deputy of the Polish wartime military government, who was hanged in 1953.

Polish historians claim that charges against Fiedor of killing Soviet soldiers and communists were fabricated. The military prosecutor, who is expected to make a

formal application for extradition through the Polish justice ministry, is bringing the case on the grounds that Mrs Brus contravened communist-era law by holding the general for more than six months without charge. "She used her role as military prosecutor to persecute opponents of the communist regime on the basis of their political views or their religious faiths," Janusz Palusz, a spokesman for the military prosecutor, said. If convicted in a Polish court, she faces up to 10 years imprisonment.

Mrs Brus, whose husband, Wlodzislaw Brus, is emeritus Professor of Modern Russian and East European Studies at Wolfson College, Oxford, was expelled from the judiciary in 1956 after Poland underwent an early form of perestroika.

She settled in Britain with her husband after fleeing Poland during a purge against Jews by the communist authorities in 1958.

Wlodzislaw Kulesza, director of the Main Commission for Investigating Crimes against the Polish Nation, said Mrs Brus could face charges. He said Fiedor was

prosecuted despite the absurdity of the charges. Wlodzislaw Bartoszewski, a former Solidarity foreign minister, has testified to the commission about being held without charge after the war. After asking to be shown his arrest warrant, he swears to being shown a "handful of blank, but signed, warrants."

At her home in Oxford, Mrs Brus said: "I will welcome any attempts to seek extradition. I am sure that an examination in Britain, in front of an unbiased arbitrator, will reveal the absolute absurdity of the charges against me."

Mr Kulesza said 2,450 death sentences were officially passed during Poland's Stalinist period from 1944 to 1956. He suspects that almost twice that number were passed, of which half were probably carried out.

Efforts to prosecute the "hanging judges" who are still alive have all proved unsuccessful. The judge responsible for passing the death sentence against Fiedor, Maria Gorowska, died in January, at the age of 85, before she could stand trial. Fiedor was a

national institution by the time he was hanged. A veteran of the Polish-Soviet war of 1919-20, he was sent by the Polish government-in-exile in London during the second world war to the Polish underground resistance, where he was made chief of the anti-Nazi group Kedyw. He directed the sabotage of factories and railway lines crucial to the German war effort. His most famous operation was the assassination of the chief of Warsaw's occupant police force, Franz Kuttner.

Rising to deputy chief of the Home Army when the Soviet tanks rolled into Warsaw in 1944, he changed his name and was soon arrested and transported to hard labour in the Ural for illegal dealing in currencies.

Returning to Poland in 1947, the former general reassumed his true name. Witnessed at his trial, when he was sentenced to death, were allegedly tortured into testifying against him.

"He was a great patriot," said his surviving wife, Maria Fiedor-Czarska, aged 73.

## Midland name axed after 162 years

continued from page 1

navy blue logo. Two years ago that was abandoned, along with Midland's traditional GCR symbol, as it came to be seen as a relic of the old Midland name.

HSBC, which changed its own name from Hongkong and Shanghai Bank after it bought the Midland and relocated its head office from the former colony to London, is

one of the largest banking and financial services organisations in the world, with 5,500 offices in 79 countries and assets of more than £200 billion.

However, the Chinese government, through the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, has the largest stake in HSBC,

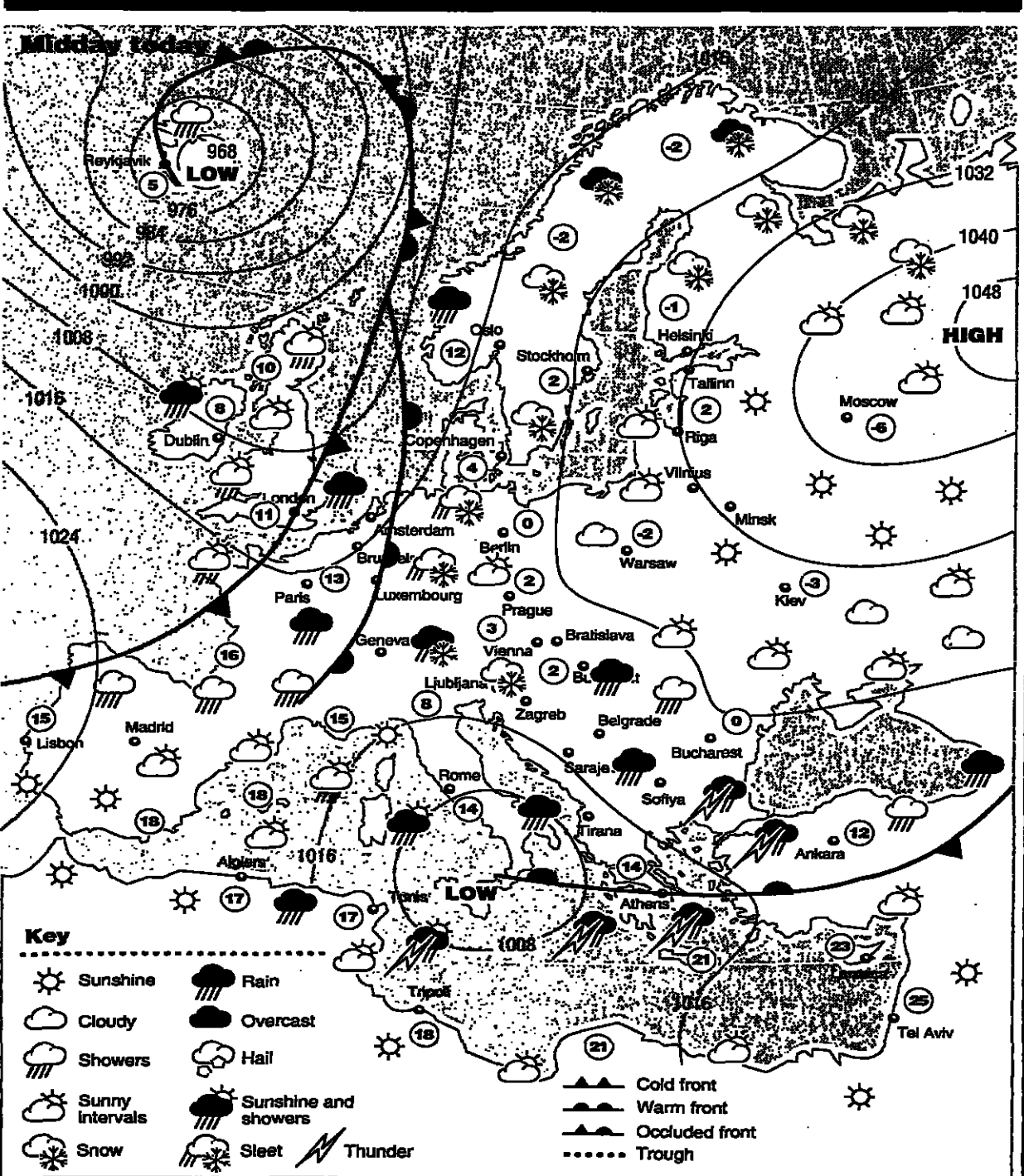
with 8.8 per cent of the shares. John Bond, the chairman, said: "Our policy of retaining the separate identity of the companies we acquired because they were well-known names in their local markets served us well for many years. However, times change and we must change with them."

"The HSBC Group operates in a global marketplace. In

creasingly the financial services industry and modern communications are borderless.

Midland's chief executive, Bill Dalton, said it made "good commercial sense" to ditch the Midland name, even though it generated "respect and affection".

### The weather in Europe



### Forecast for the cities

City	Today	Tomorrow	Monday
Algeria	17-19	18-20	18-20
Amsterdam	10-12	11-13	11-13
Athens	14-16	15-17	15-17
Berlin	8-10	9-11	9-11
Bombay	24-26	25-27	25-27
Buenos Aires	12-14	13-15	13-15
Calcutta	24-26	25-27	25-27
Cairo	18-20	19-21	19-21
Cardiff	10-12	11-13	11-13
Chennai	24-26	25-27	25-27
Copenhagen	10-12	11-13	11-13
Dublin	10-12	11-13	11-13
Edinburgh	10-12	11-13	11-13
Geneva	10-12	11-13	11-13
Hong Kong	24-26	25-27	25-27
London	10-12	11-13	11-13
Madras	24-26	25-27	25-27
Manila	24-26	25-27	25-27
Moscow	10-12	11-13	11-13
Nairobi	18-20	19-21	19-21
Paris	10-12	11-13	11-13
Rangoon	24-26	25-27	25-27
Rome	10-12	11-13	11-13
Seoul	10-12	11-13	11-13
Shanghai	10-12	11-13	11-13
Singapore	24-26	25-27	25-27
Taipei	10-12	11-13	11-13
Tokyo	10-12	11-13	11-13
Yokohama	10-12	11-13	11-13

### Around the world

City	Today	Tomorrow	Monday
Algeria	17-19	18-20	18-20
Amsterdam	10-12	11-13	11-13
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Shanghai	10-12	11-13	11-13
Singapore	24-26	25-27	25-27
Taipei	10-12	11-13	11-13
Tokyo	10-12	11-13	11-13
Yokohama	10-12	11-13	11-13

### European weather outlook

It will continue to be cold, with temperatures remaining below freezing for most of the day in the north. There is a risk of a snow flurry in most places with heavier snow likely over the mountains. Highs ranging from -5C in the north to -1C in the south. Low Countries, Germany, Austria.

A mainly overcast day with persistent fog and low clouds in the east. There will also be some outbreaks of rain, sleet or snow, with the heaviest snowfalls occurring over Switzerland. Highs ranging from -2C in the east and -8C in the west.

It will be rather unsettled with spells of heavy rain or early sleet crossing the country, but later it will turn much milder than recently. There is a chance of some brightness with the odd sunny spell breaking through in the north-west. Highs ranging from -5C in the north-east to 15C in the south-west.

Southern Spain and Portugal will have blue skies and plenty of sunshine. Further inland there will be more cloud around, but it should stay dry with enough sunny spells breaking through to make it a fairly bright and pleasant day. The north coast will have showers threatening for most of the day. Highs of 15-20C.

North-western areas will have some decent sunshine, but inland there will be fog patches. The south will see some showers with a risk of thunder at times. Highs ranging from only 7C in the Po valley to 17C in the south.

Wet everywhere, with heavy rain and thunderstorms breaking out. Highs between 13C and 19C.

### Television and radio — Saturday

Channel	Time	Programme
BBC 1	6.00am	News
BBC 1	6.30am	News
BBC 1	7.00am	News
BBC 1	7.30am	News
BBC 1	8.00am	News
BBC 1	8.30am	News
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**'US branded goods makers achieve no more profit in the UK than America. It is largely down to the retailers'**  
**Simon Lock, US brands adviser**



Christmas shoppers in London last night... are they being asked to pay too much for goods?

PHOTOGRAPH: TOM JENNINGS

**'CD prices are fairly consistent around Europe, but there are much lower prices outside Europe. I smell a rat'**  
**Patrick Barwise, Consumers' Association**

# Shoppers caught in prices crossfire

Julia Finch and Lisa Buckingham

**M**ILLIONS of shoppers will be piling into town centres and out-of-town retail parks this morning as the busiest month in the shopping calendar gets under way. At the same time thousands of Christmas bargain hunters will be filling cross-Channel ferries and even transatlantic flights to snag up the same goods at far lower prices.

For Britain is swiftly gaining a reputation as one of the world's most expensive places to shop.

Undoubtedly, the strong pound has had a significant impact on price comparisons. An exchange rate that now provides more than nine French francs to the pound makes French stores look particularly cheap, but it does not fully explain why a pair of men's Timberland Boots should be £36 cheaper in a

Paris department store than its London equivalent, or why a bottle of Chanel No 5 Eau de Parfum should cost a third more in England than France, especially when strong sterling should reduce the price of goods imported into Britain.

And the exchange rate argument is almost irrelevant in comparing prices between Britain and the US, as the pound/dollar rate has been relatively stable for five years.

The prices that British shoppers are being asked to pay is causing concern at the highest levels. The Chancellor, Gordon Brown, has asked the European Commission to investigate price differentials within the European Union.

The Office of Fair Trading is also stepping up its interest. It recently launched an inquiry into supermarket food prices, and after criticism by American chip-maker Intel of British computer prices in general and retailer Dixons in particular,

will also investigate the pricing of personal computers.

The OFT director general, John Bridgeman, has said he is concerned about British prices, but so far the OFT has no plans to look more widely at retail pricing. "Pricing is not a justification for a full OFT inquiry," said a spokesman. "There has to be some anti-competitive element."

Inevitably, retailers blame suppliers for high prices, while suppliers blame the stores.

Mr Gilmore, marketing director at House of Fraser, which stocks a huge range of international brand name goods, said: "We charge the prices we need to cover our costs and our normal margins."

But Simon Lock, an adviser to US brands Nike and Tommy Hilfiger, said: "None of the US branded goods manufacturers make more profit in the UK than America. It is largely down to the retailers."

He added, however, that there were extra costs associ-

ated with distributing and marketing goods in Europe.

A spokesman for EMI was unable to explain why CD prices in Britain are higher than in the US and many other European countries. But a spokeswoman for the British Phonographic Industry said: "It is a complex issue. It is very difficult to compare the UK with America because we have different tax systems, a different retail infrastructure and the US market offers considerable economies of scale."

She added: "Here in the UK we also invest 13 per cent of turnover in discovering and promoting new artists, which is very high."

Patrick Barwise, director of the Centre for Marketing at the London Business School, said there was no justification for the difference. "It is a world market dominated by five companies and with concentrated retailing. Prices are fairly consistent around Europe, but there are significantly lower prices outside

Europe. I smell a rat." Professor Barwise, who is also deputy chairman of the Consumers' Association, said he believed there should be OFT inquiries into prices of CDs, computer and consumer electronics and the motor industry.

Car prices in Britain are about 30 per cent higher than elsewhere. Peugeot, for instance, operates on 40 per cent profit margins in Britain, and one senior executive

said the car company was, unsurprisingly, "very satisfied with this situation".

Professor Barwise also backs the new OFT inquiry into supermarkets. He believes Tesco, Sainsbury, Asda and Safeway — which account for 47 per cent of the UK's £37 billion annual grocery sales, compared with 30 per cent 10 years ago — may be cashing in at their customers' and suppliers' expense.

"The top four have enormous power and it is now a valid question whether their power has got so great that they have been squeezing suppliers and not passing on the savings."

A recent survey found that an average £50 British shopping basket would cost £53 in Germany, and many staple goods in France cost half as much as they do in Britain.

The British Retail Consortium (BRC), a lobby group for UK store groups, points out

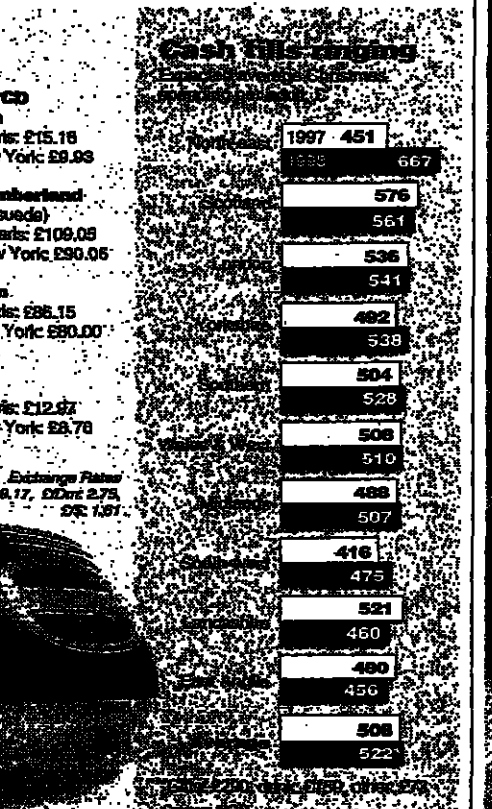
that 17.5 per cent VAT is charged on items such as crisps, bottled water and orange juice, whereas the tax rate in France is 5.5 per cent. However, most food products in the UK are still zero-rated for VAT.

What the BRC does not explain is why UK supermarkets operate on profit margins three times higher than their European rivals.

Leader comment, page 8

## Shopping around

Le Crapet 12" round average Christmas	George Michael CD
London: £100.00 Paris: £59.90 Berlin: n/a New York: £71.63	Ladies & Gentsmen London: £18.99 Paris: £15.16 Berlin: £14.54 New York: \$9.99
Levi 501s	Pair of men's Timberland boots (classic tan suede)
London: £59.95 Paris: £49.90 Berlin: £57.50 New York: \$24.85	London: £145.00 Paris: £109.05 Berlin: £108.00 New York: \$90.05
Chicago Dramatically Different Motormen (single)	Sony PlayStation
London: £24.50 Paris: £26.50 Berlin: £28.72 New York: £12.11	London: £39.00 Paris: £28.15 Berlin: £73.64 New York: \$60.00
Johnnie Walker Black Label (70cl)	George and the Jungle Video
London: £18.99 Paris: £15.25 Berlin: £20.16 New York: £18.76	London: £14.99 Paris: £12.47 Berlin: £14.50 New York: \$8.78
Chanel No 5 (50ml Eau de Parfum)	Exchange Rate
London: £26.50 Paris: £27.26 Berlin: £28.16 New York: \$42.00	GBP: 0.17, USD: 2.75, JPY: 1.91
The Street Lawyer by John Gisham (paperback)	Apple iMac computer
London: £10.00 Paris: £13.53 Berlin: n/a New York: \$4.97	London: £999.99 Paris: £972.90 Berlin: £1009.00 New York: \$773.75



## Geordies plan seasonal spending spree to relieve economic gloom

Sarah Hall

**R**EDUNDANCY, the decline of manufacturing industry, the downward spiral of Geasia — the North-east has long been associated with gloom. But yesterday Geordies were revealed as the country's most lavish Christmas shoppers, according to a nationwide survey of retailers.

They are expected to spend an average of £866 each on festivities this year — £144 more than the national average and over £200 more than the most meagre sum, £466, shelled out by East Anglians.

Geordies will spend more than anyone else on food and drink — £202 compared

with the national average of £159; on clothes — £177, compared with £118; and on gifts in general — £391 compared with £290.

The findings, published by accountancy firm Deloitte and Touche, also show that those in the North-east will part with over £100 more than the second highest spenders, the Scots, who will shell out an average £561.

But, while those in London, Yorkshire and the South will spend above the national average, the spirit of Christmas will be least evident in East Anglia, Lancashire (£459) and the South-west (£474).

The NOP poll, which questioned 1,000 adults, also revealed that women are more likely to start

shopping early for Christmas and spend more on presents than men — £294 compared to £285.

And, while men expect to spend the most on their partner, women will spend the most on their children. Mothers should expect to receive their children's most expensive present: only 1 per cent of fathers will be similarly favoured.

The findings also reveal that, while those in the North-east will be the most generous, they are also the most pessimistic about the likelihood of a recession. A total of 69 per cent believe the economic situation will worsen, compared to 49 per cent nationally.

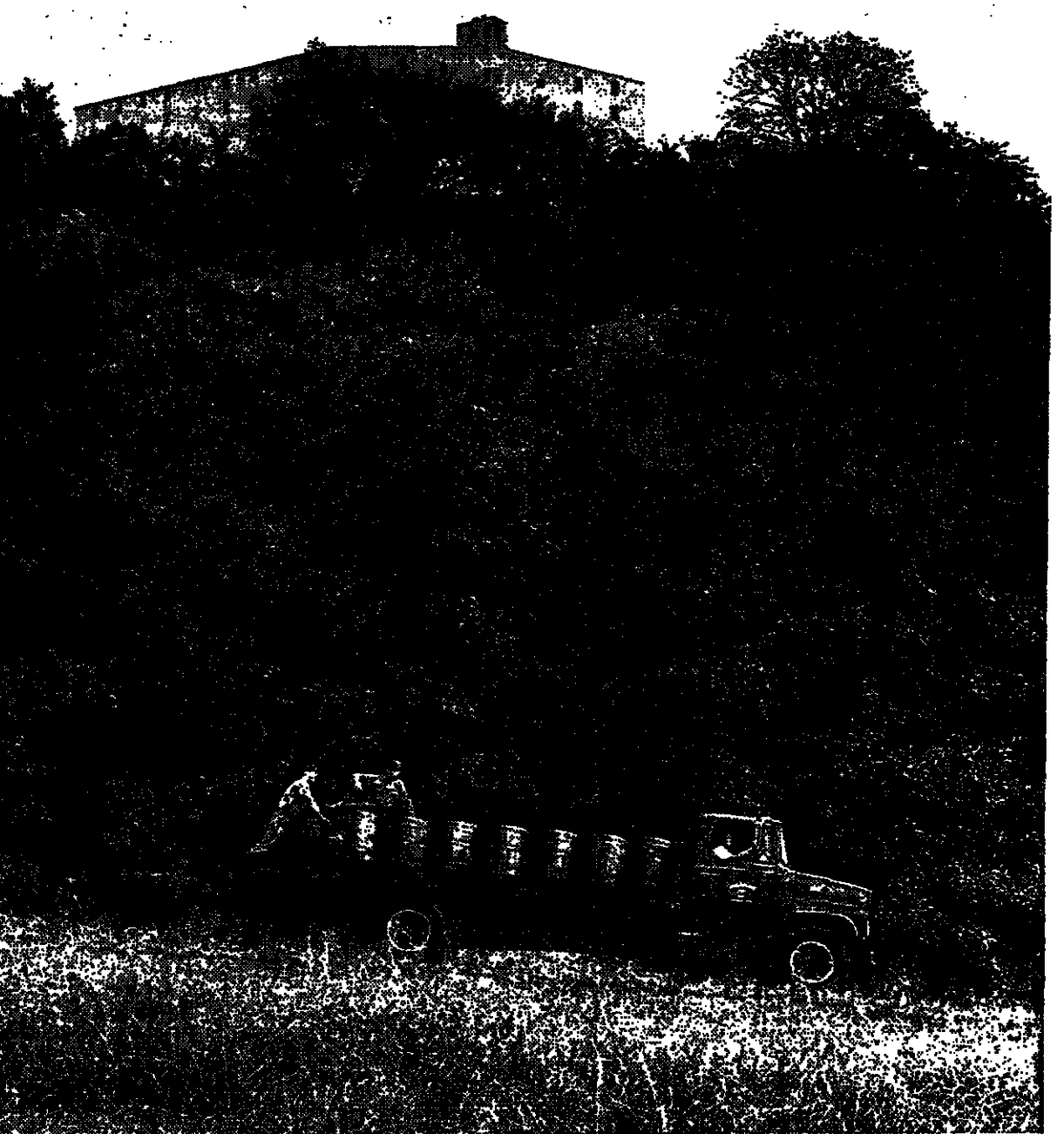
But Deloitte and Touche attribute the flamboyant spending in the North-east

— a dramatic increase on the £451 spent per person in the region last year — to such anxiety.

Richard Lloyd-Owen, head of the firm's consumer business sector, said: "It might seem odd that, at the same time they are spending the most, they are they most pessimistic about the future, but it could be those in the North-east are determined to have one good last Christmas."

Mr Lloyd-Owen added that the wide range in amounts different regions were prepared to spend was a new development in four years of surveys.

Last year's top shoppers, the Scots, parted with £576, while the least prodigal, those in the South-west, spent £160 less — £416.



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**Vivek Chaudhary** on controversial measures to curb match violence, including passport restrictions for unconvicted supporters

## Tough rules proposed to stamp out football thugs

**T**OUGH powers to combat football hooliganism, including a controversial measure to prevent known but unconvicted troublemakers travelling abroad, and the introduction of alcohol bans outside stadiums, were unveiled by the Government yesterday.

The measures form part of a consultation document outlining 20 proposals to clamp down on hooliganism, and are designed also to strengthen England's application to host the 2006 World Cup.

They follow the widespread violence caused by some England fans at the last World Cup, and police claims that hooliganism is on the increase this season.

Home Office minister Kate Hoey said that there was all-party support for the measures, which could become law during this parliamentary session by way of a private member's bill.

Ms Hoey added: "It is very clear that the legislation we have, though it may have served a purpose, is clearly not tough enough and is not

doing enough to isolate and marginalise the minority of criminal thugs who have tarnished our image as football supporters around the world.

"We have learned from our experience at the World Cup and from other experiences, and the reality of what is happening on the ground from our intelligence officers."

Under the proposals, courts could issue international banning orders for up to 10 years against those who have been arrested for football violence.

Courts would have the power to require people to report to a named police station when key international matches are played, and to submit their passports to police five days before the match. A new offence would be created for failing to submit a passport.

One of the most contentious proposals deals with unconvicted troublemakers, who could also be subject to banning orders on the basis of information presented to court by police.

The document concedes there could be a difficulty

with such a proposal affecting unconvicted people and that some surveillance evidence would not be admissible in court. Unconvicted hooligans could also have to give up their passports.

Lawyers believe that plans to impose restriction orders on unconvicted hooligans could be the toughest to implement, throwing up a serious civil liberties issue.

Ms Parratt of Liberty, the civil rights organisation, said: "A clear distinction must be drawn between criminal convictions and other information which the police may hold about people."

"Any measure based on the logic 'we know he's guilty but we can't prove it' should ring alarm bells. Relying on information in police intelligence files is inadequate."

The document also proposes to strengthen laws on racist chanting. Under current legislation, chanting has to be done by two or more people to be an arrestable offence, but the document states that one person chanting alone might also face arrest for racist obscenities in the stadium.

For potentially volatile matches, courts should also be able to impose bans on alcohol sales at pubs and off-licences around the football grounds, which would extend to the carrying and consumption of alcohol in the area.

The period of time during which committed offences are considered football-related should also be extended from less than five hours to 72 hours either side of a match, the proposals say.

Tony Banks, the Sports Minister, said: "The nature of hooliganism has changed and the violence has shifted from the grounds to other areas. These proposals will ensure that Britain has some of the toughest anti-hooligan legislation in the world. We will carry on working to eliminate this problem."

The proposals were welcomed by Sir Brian Hayes, the Football Association's security adviser, who said that it was quite clear that the present legislation needed strengthening.



If arrested during match unrest, like some fans at France 98, English supporters could face a 10-year ban. PHOTOGRAPH: SEAN SMITH

**John Mullin** on Irish court ruling

## Addict gets life for Guerin killing

**P**OLICE in Ireland were celebrating last night after a Dublin drugs dealer was found guilty of the murder two years ago of the investigative journalist Veronica Guerin. They had mounted the biggest criminal inquiry in Irish history.

The Special Criminal Court in Dublin ruled after an eight-week trial that Paul Ward, aged 34, disposed of the gun and motorcycle used in the shooting.

Because Ward was involved in the plan to shoot Ms Guerin, he was an accessory before the fact. That meant he was guilty of murder.

He was sentenced to life imprisonment and his lawyers indicated he would appeal.

Another alleged gang member is facing trial next year for Ms Guerin's murder. A second is fighting extradition from England, while a third was jailed last year for 12 years on drugs charges. Guerin's multi-million pound empire, it was Ireland's biggest drug smuggling operation, importing 100 tonnes of cannabis a year.

Ms Guerin, whose son, Cathal, was then aged six, was shot as she sat in her car at traffic lights at Clonsilla on the outskirts of Dublin. She was returning to the city after appearing in Naas, County Kildare, on a speeding charge and had just finished a mobile telephone call.

Two men wearing full-face helmets pulled up alongside her car on a motorcycle. The pillion passenger pumped six shots into her from a .357 Magnum. She tried to escape but was dead within seconds.

The assassination of Ms Guerin, who worked for the Sunday Independent, outraged the Irish Republic. The government quickly brought in legislation allowing criminal assets to be seized and signalled restrictions in bail provisions.

The Special Criminal Court, which was designed to deal with paramilitary trials, yesterday convicted Ward, a heroin addict, solely on the testimony of Charles Bowden, aged 34, another gang member, who prepared the revolver used in the attack.

Bowden, a former Irish Army marksman, turned state evidence and became Ireland's first supergrass. He was given immunity from prosecution and outlined to police the roles of six men in killing Ms Guerin.

He also took police to the gang's arms dump, two graves at a Jewish cemetery in Tallaght, near Dublin. It contained a sub-machine gun, six other guns, and ammunition, including dum-dum bullets.

Bowden, whom the judges called a "self-serving, deeply avaricious and potentially vicious criminal", is serving a six-year sentence imposed last year for drugs and firearms offences.

He is to be given a new identity on his release from Arbour Hill prison in Dublin, where he is in solitary confinement for his own safety. The gang leader has made threats to his life.

Bowden will also be given money to make a new life abroad. His family is under Ireland's witness protection scheme.

In a 60-minute judgment, the court was scathing about the Garda interrogation of Ward, nicknamed Elppo, who earned at least £150,000 a year. It ruled as inadmissible incriminating remarks police claimed he made after his arrest, saying they had been made under "grievous psychological pressure, if they were made at all."

His girlfriend, Vanessa Meehan, aged 22, and his mother, Elizabeth Ward, 74, were brought to see Ward at Lucan police station, where the murder inquiry was based. The judges said the aim was to soften up Ward into telling them what he had done with the gun. It was never found.

After Ms Meehan's emotional visit, police claimed that Ward, who had remained silent throughout 14 hours of interrogation, told them: "We had it planned after the job was done on Guerin, they would come back to my place. I was to get rid of the gear."

But the judges made their scepticism clear. They pointed out that two officers interviewing him the next morning were seemingly unaware of the major breakthrough. They called Ward's apparent decision to answer questions a "remarkable volte-face".

Mr Justice Barr said the court exercised extreme caution with Bowden's evidence, delivered over five days. The judges realised that he would lie without hesitation when it suited him to do so.

They rejected his claim that he had been overcome with remorse after he had been shown pictures of Ms Guerin on a dissecting table, riddled with bullet holes. He said in evidence he imagined his wife's face on the body and decided to confess all.

The judges said that instead, Bowden, as lieutenant to the gang's leader, would have welcomed Guerin's murder, and pointed to a raucous party at his home on the night she died. He had made a cold and dispassionate assessment and struck the best bargain he could.

They decided his testimony had a "strong ring of truth" about it. Because Bowden had already admitted his role, there would be no benefit to him in lying about what part Ward played. Any falsehood would have jeopardised his deal with police.



The murder scene (above) where journalist Veronica Guerin (below left) was shot and (below right) Paul Ward



## French find murder lead

Jon Henley in Paris

**F**RENCH police yesterday released a second picture of the suspected murderer of Caroline Dickinson, the Cornish schoolgirl raped and suffocated in a Brittany youth hostel two years ago — a near-identical sketch composed after the rape of a student in Nancy in 1998.

The resemblance was so striking that we decided to release the two pictures together in the hope of jogging someone's memory," said Patrick Duchamp, Nancy's police chief. "The French rape victim is completely confident Caroline's attacker is the same man who assaulted her, and in fact believes the second picture is a more accurate likeness."

Both identikit sketches show a man described by police as being of European origin, between 25 and 30 years old, six feet tall, of athletic build and broad-shouldered. Aged about 30, he has a wide nose,

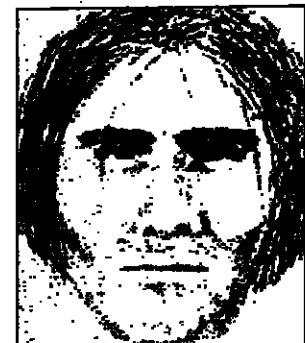
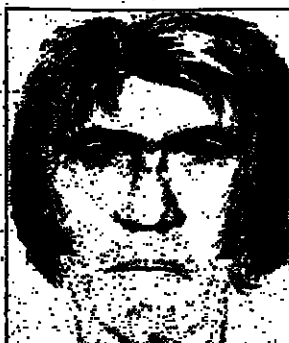
mid-length, dark brown hair, thick bushy eyebrows, a weathered complexion and unkempt appearance.

The picture of Caroline's suspected murderer, who was spotted near the youth hostel by schoolfriends, teachers and locals before the attack, was first released in February and prompted more than 1,300 calls to a police hotline. But despite following up more than 100 leads, police have yet to find the man.

Mr Duchamp said one of his officers had found the sketch about three weeks ago and been reminded of the suspect in the 1998 case that he had withdrawn the dossier from police files and compared the pictures.

Judge Raymond van Ruymbek, the magistrate who took over the 28-month investigation into Caroline's death last year, requested the publication of both sketches.

The judge, who inherited the case after allegations of incompetence against his predecessor, will travel next week to Nancy to interview the 25-year-



The sketch of the attacker involved in a rape in 1993 (top) released by French police yesterday, and the original picture of the suspect in the Caroline Dickinson murder

old rape victim.

DNA tests on clothing worn by the student when she was raped at knifepoint in May 1993 proved unsuccessful because the samples had deteriorated, Mr Duchamp said.

Caroline, aged 13, was raped and smothered on July 19, 1996 while other girls from her school in Launceston were asleep in a dormitory at Pleine-Fougères youth hostel,

near Mont St Michel.

Since taking over the case, Mr van Ruymbek has ordered mass DNA testing in the village. Genetic tests have been carried out on all 422 males aged between 15 and 60 in a search for DNA samples matching those found on Caroline's body. He also linked the investigation to an attack at a hostel in nearby Saint-Lunaire.

## Troublemakers' appetites whetted by the World Cup

**T**HE truth about football hooliganism is that it never went away, but for the last three years it received less publicity than before.

The World Cup changed all that and the trouble that accompanied England wherever they played in France seems to have whetted the appetites of hooligans.

Both the Football Association and police say that this season, there has been an increase in hooliganism.

Most trouble has taken place away from stadiums, as is the trend given the high police profile and security cameras in and around grounds.

Two weeks ago, 20 Tottenham fans were arrested after attacking a pub in which Arsenal fans were drinking, following a league match.

Earlier this season, Manchester United and Liverpool fans clashed in a pre-arranged fight before their teams played each other. Two men received serious stab wounds and two mounted policemen were attacked.

Most of the violence this season, however, has taken place at lower league clubs where security is sometimes less efficient than Premier League clubs.

Football authorities and the Government are keen to improve the tarnished image of English football, given the events of the World Cup. Tough legislation is being seen as vital to England's bid for the 2006 World Cup.

The English game cannot afford a repeat of the events of the summer and is adamant that hooliganism must be stamped out both at home and abroad.

## Footballer, 8, faces disciplinary hearing after attacking referee

**A**s a midfielder, Jimmy Sheppard tries to emulate the silky skills of Arsenal's French player Emmanuel Petit, writes Vivek Chaudhary.

But last week, it was Sheffield Wednesday's Italian striker, Paolo Di Canio, sent off for attacking a referee, with whom Sheppard was being compared.

Both Sheppard and Di Canio had clashed with an opponent before attacking the referee. Both were sent off, and in both incidents the referee considered resigning. However, Sheppard, who plays for the Highfield

Hawks in Hampshire, is eight, making him one of the youngest footballers in Britain to face a disciplinary hearing.

The referee, Ed McCabe, showed him the red card after he punched an opponent who had fouled him during a match against Jubilee Rangers at New Milton, Hampshire. Sheppard then tried to punch the startled referee.

Mr McCabe said: "The only thing to do was stop the game. I won't be refereeing a junior match again."

Sheppard has been suspended by his club.

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A rash of homeless deaths has pricked the conscience of a country that is proud of its social policies

# Down and out in the cold in Paris

Jon Henley in Paris

**F**RANCE was forced to delve deep into its social conscience this week, after 10 homeless people died of hypothermia, one of them outside the doors of a hospital, in a cold snap in which temperatures in central Paris plummeted to minus 5C.

As the death toll rose, President Jacques Chirac warned: "In this crucial period, everyone should feel personally concerned. The simple gesture of pointing out a person in danger could save a life."

His employment and solidarity minister, Martine Aubry, exhorted every French man and woman to open their eyes to the suffering.

According to official estimates, France, which boasts

weather is freezing now that we denounce it. It is neither a new scandal nor even an intermittent one. It is, dramatically and unacceptably, a daily scandal."

This year the national assembly passed a controversial anti-poverty bill aimed at delivering on Mr Chirac's 1995 campaign promise to heal what he called the "immense social fracture" between rich and poor in France.

"We want to give those who are being left on the roadside the means of taking their fate into their own hands and emerging from state aid and exclusion, rather than to hand out cheques that merely allow them to survive," Ms Aubry said of the bill.

An estimated 10 per cent of France's 60 million people currently live below the poverty line. More than 3 million are unemployed, some million receive welfare hand-outs, 2 million are poorly housed and around 250,000 are estimated to be homeless.

At an estimated cost of \$500 million, the new legislation calls for the creation of 300,000 minimum-wage jobs over five years, the construction of 100,000 subsidised housing units, the requisitioning of empty apartments to house the homeless, and better access to health care for the needy.

But even the law's most fervent supporters admit it will take years before its effects make themselves felt.

For volunteers manning the emergency hostels in Paris, the main problem appears to be that those most in need do not know what they are entitled to.

There are enough beds now," said Patrick Harvé, manager of the 380-bed Mle de Pain hostel in the 8th arrondissement. "No one should be freezing to death on the street. But so many don't know where to go."

With the temperature in the capital last night above zero yesterday, Stéphane, a 27-year-old, begging outside Concorde metro station, agreed that beds were not the issue.

"Sure, you can find one," he said. "But the decent hostels are full by three or four in the afternoon and you have to trail all round the city looking for a mattress. That's our life... we trail around for food, for a bed, for our laundry. It's not surprising when it gets to midnight and it's minus 6, that some people just give up."



President Jacques Chirac told people that 'pointing out a person in danger could save a life'

one of the best-funded welfare systems in western Europe, has 500,000 people who are either homeless or without a fixed address.

The number of emergency hostel beds totals 15,000 — more than double the figure 10 years ago, and almost enough, social workers say, to deal with demand. But not quite.

"It is a scandal that in 1998, men and women are still living and dying in the street," the FNARS charity said. "It is not because the



A policeman with the Brigade for the Assistance of Homeless People talks to a homeless man in Paris, after 10 people sleeping rough died of hypothermia this week. PHOTOGRAPH: JEROME DELAY

## How other cities handle people sleeping rough

**ROME** — Charity workers have for years complained of indifference both at local and national government level towards Italy's homeless. The Osservatorio di Milano voluntary group estimated last year that there were some 80,000 people without a fixed residence, two-thirds of whom lived in the big cities.

But the social profile of Italy's homeless is different from that of Britain's. The homeless tend to be tramps in the traditional mould, or illegal immigrants.

It is rare to see young Italians sleeping rough. Strong family ties ensure that few leave home until after marriage, and most would not dream of setting off for another part of the country in search of work.

Last year, the Osservatorio di Milano launched an initiative for New Year's Eve under the slogan "Make another place at your table". Eighty families in Milan and Rome were persuaded to see in 1998 with a homeless person.

John Hooper

**NEW YORK** — Mayor Rudy Giuliani deals with the homeless in the same way he tackles every other problem — he gets tough. Homeless people? Sweep them off the street.

On nights when the temperature dips below 5C the police have the right to force the homeless into vans and take them to temporary shelters, some of them with room for up to 1,000 people.

An estimated 10,000 people live on the city's streets but most visitors see them only in ones and twos, so successful has Mr Giuliani been in encouraging them to decamp from Manhattan in the five years since he became mayor.

"They have gone to a lot of different places," he said, which means other boroughs, where tourists rarely venture. "Some are in various forms of assisted housing. The way we have approached the homeless problem is that there is no such individual thing as homelessness. They should be taken off the streets and jailed."

About 21,000 homeless families have moved out of shelters and into subsidised housing during the Giuliani years, leaving 4,700 families without homes.

Michael Ellison

**JOHANNESBURG** — With no safety net, few hostels and no welfare benefits, homeless people in the Johannesburg region rely on Churches for help.

"It is often said that there are 6,000 homeless people in Gauteng (Johannesburg and Pretoria) but if you count people living in shacks in squatter camps, the number is closer to 120,000," said Ted Dhlamini, a journalist at the Homeless Talk newspaper.

It is currently summer in the southern hemisphere, but Johannesburg's bitter winters claim hundreds of lives. To clear the streets of Johannesburg, the city council removes homeless people to a 50,000-strong camp called Weltevreden Farm, where each new arrival receives a small plot of land, but no new materials with which to construct a shack.

"In Europe many homeless people have mental health problems," Mr Dhlamini said. "But in South Africa you meet people with degrees sleeping in the streets."

Alex Duval Smith

**GENEVA** — For decades, Switzerland was so comfortable in its bubble of prosperity that the authorities never bothered to measure homelessness and, by European standards, it is not a problem.

It is rare to come across someone huddled in a doorway overnight. There are no national statistics, but in an urban canton like Geneva every winter a few hundred people take advantage of facilities ranging from community centres to railway carriages run by the Red Cross.

Social workers boast that anyone who sleeps in the street wants to. As the cold weather took hold in Geneva last week, community workers patrolled parks to persuade up to 100 vagrants to take advantage of the shelter on offer. "It's a way of life that's just not accepted in Switzerland," Daniel Bostelli, of the Salvation Army, said.

More than 500 beds are available for the homeless in Geneva. Help is provided by a network of charities and specialised community groups that have appeared in the past decade, often subsidised by the local authorities.

Peter Capella

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## A nation of profiteers

UK prices are absurdly high

THE TIME has come for the Government to take direct action against inflation. The reason has nothing directly to do with monetary policy (though there is still a very strong case for another reduction in interest rates). It is because the absolute level of prices in the UK has become absurdly high. As our report on page three today shows, Britain has become one of the most expensive places in the world to shop — and for no good reason. Profiteering shopkeepers must be stopped along with anyone else helping to keep prices in this country unnecessarily high. Why on earth is a uniform product like a pair of men's Timberland boots £36 cheaper in a Paris department store than in London and an amazing £55 cheaper in New York? Why does a pound of prime file steak cost £12 in London (where the BSE scare has caused a collapse in prices at a time when farm incomes have slumped) but only £4.96 in New York?

These are not isolated cases. Car prices

are 30 per cent higher in the UK than elsewhere and something similar goes for computer products and many consumer durables. Intel, the world's biggest microchip producer, has accused Dixons of using its strong high-street presence to keep the prices of personal computers too high. This is not to mention the proliferation of liquor stores around French Channel ports to cater for the hordes of Brits who find it cheaper to pay for a trip across the channel to buy cheaper drinks. Neither currency movements nor tax rates (except for liquor) can explain why Britain is in danger of becoming the profiteering center of the world.

Ministers and regulators seem at last to be aware of the problem, but they aren't doing as much as they could about it. Sure, Gordon Brown has asked the European Commission to investigate price differentials (why couldn't the Government do it itself?) and the Director General of Fair Trading has admitted that there is a problem. But that's pretty well where it ends at the moment. The OFT has no plans to look more widely at retail prices beyond the recently announced inquiry into supermarkets and into Dixons. In both cases announcement of the investigations coincided with strong outside pressures from the press and public opinion.

If the Government were to launch a full

frontal attack on high prices, then it would support the case for further reductions in interest rates. The worries of the Governor of the Bank that lower rates would threaten the Government's 2.5 per cent inflation target are almost certainly misplaced. But they would be greatly relieved if he knew that direct action would reduce the high level of prices that consumers in the UK are landed with. Globalisation was supposed to bring about a lowering of prices for similar products. Why has it passed us by?

## The St Ives factor

Export it to the rest of the UK

THE Tate Gallery of Cornwall has not only proved to be a success in its own right — it received its millionth visitor this week, eight years ahead of schedule — but has also generated a "halo" effect on the local economy. This is but the latest instance of the economic power of the arts, which is not easily detected in the official figures for gross domestic product (GDP) simply because arts activity is scattered among a number of different categories. It will become increasingly important in the years ahead as lottery projects come on stream up and down the country, including the Tate Gallery's own new museum of modern art

in the converted Bankside power station in London.

Surveys show that the arts in the broadest sense (taking in everything from book publishing and television to museum visits) is a big creator of new jobs and regularly produces a large balance of payments surplus (while manufacturing industry regularly turns in a deficit). This doesn't mean manufacturing is unimportant, because it is not. It is just that it has been wantonly neglected. An expanding economy needs to fire on all cylinders — manufacturing, services, the arts and infrastructure. The arts are particularly important because Britain can claim a comparative advantage in this field, as is reflected in the vibrancy of theatre, the slickness of advertising, the impact of BritArt and the pulling power of heritage. Artistic activities are to be enjoyed primarily for self-enrichment, but acknowledgment of the economic dimension will lead to even more enrichment in future as museums, galleries and theatres attract a wider audience.

Cities like Glasgow, as well as small communities like St Ives, have already benefited from the pulling power of the arts. People are much more likely to want to visit and work in an environment with deep cultural roots. No one knows for sure the best environment in which creative activity

flourishes any more than they know for certain the magic ingredients that ignite economic growth. It's not just money. It's still a puzzle why BritArt flourished at a time when the Conservative government was squeezing and closing art schools — and why there was a mini-revival of the (squeezed) British film industry while heavily subsidised French films failed to make an international impact. But infrastructure is vital. Without places to show modern paintings no one will know about them. Without theatres to visit, plays can't be put on. Which is why the completion of the first batch of lottery projects could soon provide the platform for further growth.

Labour in opposition didn't have a credible policy for the arts. But in office it has made up for it by replacing five years of revenue squeeze with an extra £125 millions of new money over the next three years. It has also changed spending criteria so that the new lottery buildings won't face instant closure from revenue deficits. Success isn't, of course, guaranteed. The whole project may flop if an unexpectedly large recession stops people from spending and deters foreign visitors. But if all goes well the arts will play a vital role in regenerating the regions as well as London. Perhaps the whole economy will benefit from what could come to be known as the St Ives effect.

## Letters to the Editor

### Will the Dome be well hung?

BARRY Horne is on hunger-strike and may die for his opposition to the vivisection of animals (Making of a martyr, G2, November 26). He will end this action if the Government set a date for a Royal Commission. Home Office Minister George Howarth says he will not give in to blackmail. Labour's pre-election document New Life for Animals promised: "We will support a Royal Commission to review the effectiveness and justification of animal experiments, and to examine alternatives." How can a demand that the Government honour commitments be blackmail?

Peter Allen, Worthing, W Sussex.

I HAVE always enjoyed My Cultural Life, relishing such philistine icons as John Mortenson and Tamara. I've read a book, honest! Backwith Now, with the ponderings of Nicky Clarke (November 27), crimpier to the rich and pointless, you've let the cat out of the Louis Vuitton. "I don't do any reading except on long-haul flights... Pretty lightweight I know, but I prefer a fast-food film... Normally I'm a great admirer of Andrew Lloyd Webber." The whole column is a post-modern joke, like Bel Littlejohn. Isn't it?

Tim Footman, Wallington, Surrey.

WHAT on earth is Melissa Benn doing, perpetuating the most sexist of all metaphors (Wanted: Blair's babe with feminist balls, November 26)? Balls are floppy, feeble, vulnerable things. Their only positive characteristic is that they are masculine. Is pure masculinity what she wants? Tony Sudbery, York

I AM glad to see from the illustration on your front page (November 27) that public hangings will form part of the millennium celebration. Who should go first? Stephen Kennard, London.

### See to it, Mr Straw...

IN August 1973 I made what proved to be my last personal report to President Salvador Allende about the progress of our work in redesigning the socio-economic system of Chile, based on decentralisation and real-time accountability at all levels. Allende was the head of state, Gen Pinochet, commander-in-chief. When Chile awoke on September 11, this was still the case. By the evening, the armed forces had bombed the presidential palace and Allende had been murdered. This traitorous act was the work of Pinochet. He was not the head of state — Allende was.

It's a pity the Spanish indictment could not begin with that simple act. No possible immunity could legitimately be proposed for that, nor for the atrocities that immediately began. The army and secret police, Dina, were let loose on a selective rampage of murder and torture. The Home Secretary might well reflect on issues of compassion.

You report the Leader of the Opposition as invoking Chile as a longstanding ally (Judge, November 26). The Chilean navy was indeed modelled on the Royal

Navy, and the support of the armed forces for the legitimate government was secure inside the constitution until June 1973, when General Prats was the commander-in-chief. He was a staunch ally and friend of Allende, and had personally disarmed and arrested a tank commander who was attempting to mount a coup. But General Prats was ousted (and later assassinated).

Only then did Pinochet mount the stage, rapidly turning to treachery with the help of the Americans, and their infamous destabilisation policy. In support of the "longstanding ally" who was being ousted on September 11, I sent an overnight telegram to the foreign secretary beseeching him not to recognise the illegal action. But Britain was the first nation to recognise Pinochet the very next day. So much for allies.

As you say in your leading article, Pinochet's claim that he saved Chile from a Soviet-inspired tyranny is nonsense. In fact, Moscow was hostile to Allende. His "peaceful road to socialism" was inimical to the centralised planning of the Soviet Union. This is but one example of the falsity that has

been fed to the people all this time: my Chilean students today, for instance, are astonished to learn what really happened. Many people also tell me they are puzzled by the vociferous support for Pinochet. One has to remember that monetary economics after 1973 created misery for the poor, but served the middle classes, business and industry, very well. As Shaw succinctly remarked, he who robs Peter to pay Paul, can count on the support of Paul.

I am remembering Salvador Allende now, in particular his powerful appeal to the UN Assembly for rescue from the hegemony of the US, which was loudly applauded and totally ignored, and his inspiring broadcast to the nation made as the bombs were falling on the presidential palace. "Fear the calm mettle of my voice," he said, as he assured everyone sanity would eventually return to the country in which he passionately believed and to which he had devoted his life. For God's sake, Mr Straw, see to it.

Prof Stafford Beer, Scientific Director of Project Cybersyn, Chile, 1971-73. Pont Ceudwyn, Ceredigion.

### ... Ignore Thatcher's call for tea and sympathy

LADY Thatcher thinks Gen. Pinochet is too "old, frail, and sick" to be sent to face trial in Spain — yet strangely, only recently he was apparently fit enough to visit her for tea.

Having had this privilege, when at Amnesty I tried to discuss human rights with her shortly after she had become Tory leader, I know how exhausting and stressful it is. Despite having three decades on the general, just reading my diary about the visit makes me feel old, frail, and well, at least as sick as she seemed to feel when I mentioned countries such as Chile. David Simpson, Director, Amnesty (British Section), 1974-1978.

IS IT not striking that there would have been no "old, frail, and sick" without the votes of two judges born in South Africa? Does this not suggest that hard-won experience of human rights elsewhere in the Commonwealth may have as much to contribute to this country as the UK can offer to others? Richard Bourne, Chair, Commonwealth Human Rights Committee.

THE Law Lords' decision on the Pinochet case gives the Government an historic opportunity to demonstrate moral leadership to the world. In the Commonwealth, too, Britain can show the way. Next week local elections in Nigeria signal

the end of the last remaining vestige of apartheid in the Commonwealth and democracy there and elsewhere will need further support.

The Pinochet decision is a cause for celebration for democracy throughout the world. In the words of a former British leader, not well known for pursuit of an ethical foreign policy: "Rejoice, rejoice." Carl Wright, Director, Commonwealth Local Government Forum.

Please include a full postal address, and a daytime telephone number. We may edit letters: shorter ones are more likely to appear. Please provide a reference to the relevant article.



### Unhip Burchill should hop off

JULIE Burchill (Weekend, November 21) has her moments. A recent comic highlight was a candid description of her perusing fiction as she recovered from a succession of mind-blowing orgasms induced by her ever-willing sturdy young bean.

Sadly, I find myself amongst the dull and humourless element of your readership. Her ill-informed attack on rap and hip-hop culture is offensive. To state that Massive Attack are to be credited with "ultimately bestowing on black dance the qualities of literacy, intelligence, politics and passion", is only one of many ludicrous comments. Where does this leave Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye, Bob Marley, Duke Ellington and countless other black musicians?

"American rap artists are, virtually to a man, braggarts and bullies... who have encouraged young black men to believe that education is worthless and ignorance is cool." Where does this leave Chuck D and KRS One who have promoted inner-city literacy projects and anti-violence campaigns? Musically, where have Massive Attack developed their style from, allowing them to be viewed as "probably the greatest popular music combo ever to exist" if not the world of hip-hop?

Of course, gangsta rap is one of the most vile and racist developments in a music which has taken almost 30 years to develop from the de-jaying and toasting tradition of reggae brought to Brooklyn by Jamaican immigrants.

Perhaps next time she fancies an educated read whilst recovering from an orgasm, she might read about the history of this criminal black music which is making great moves to unite, motivate and educate black youth. Claude Dillon, Stalybridge, Cheshire.

### Mean test

ALISTAIR Darling writes (Letters, November 26) that Working Families Tax Credit will ensure that beneficiaries keep more of each extra pound they earn. This is true, and it is an improvement on the present situation where many poorer people lose 98 per cent of each extra pound. What he does not say is that

many people will still lose 98 per cent.

If we cannot tax the rich at above 40 per cent because of the effect on their incentives, why don't the same rules apply to the poor? WFTC will give more money to the poor, but the price is that many more people will find themselves in the means-tested benefits trap. Martin Rathfelder, Manchester.

### BBC's post-devolution voice must have a Scottish accent

THE board of governors of the BBC are currently considering a revamp of the Six O'Clock News in order to respond to the new political geography of the UK (BBC chiefs divided on news presenter, November 26).

They say they are "minded" to support a format which would still be produced and edited in London, but which would reflect the fact that Scotland will have a new parliament next year and Wales and Northern Ireland new assemblies.

As presenters of BBC Scotland's news and current affairs programmes, we would say that such a "solution" would not remove existing anomalies or adequately address the new political and broadcasting imperatives.

Because the Six O'Clock News has Scotland correspondents covering the main Scottish story of the day, Scottish viewers see that item on the London-based news and frequently all over again on Reporting Scotland, which follows immediately. A Scottish Six, produced and edited in Scotland, would eradicate that problem.

Equally it is important that political stories after devolution are covered with a Scottish perspective, which is distinctively different from that of London or indeed Cardiff and Belfast.

A Scottish Six as currently envisaged would not be a parochial poor relation. It would give viewers unrestricted access to international and national news from the BBC's unrivalled network of correspondents.

But the running order and style would reflect the priorities of its audience. The radio precedent for this is well established. Good Morning Scotland is broadcast at the same time as Today, using material from the latter where appropriate.

In setting up such a programme the BBC would not be running ahead of the political process as some governors apparently fear, but merely complementing the fact of devolved government.

Ruth Wishart, Iain Macwhirter, John Milne. And eight other news and current affairs presenters, BBC Scotland.

### Health tips

GWYNETH Hemmings of the Schizophrenia Association (Letters, November 26) accuses your leader writer of championing Clozapine.

As the main UK user of Clozapine for the last eight years, it interests me that the association should adopt this stance, especially as all mainstream schizophrenia charities and all UK broadsheets and media support this unique drug.

Two patients out of 15,000 have died due to Clozapine since its UK launch. It is calculated that if the drug were used more widely, more than 1,000 lives could have been saved. Dr Mike Launer, Consultant psychiatrist, Burnley Health Care Trust.

### Sir Donald Irvine's proposals

are certain to achieve for the medical profession what Oates has achieved for teaching. So inspired am I at the prospect of being tied to guidelines in a field where human qualities such as patience, kindness and judgment are paramount that at 53 I am giving up medicine to become an ornithologist. Dr P J W Smith, Halifax.

AS the ground troops of food safety, environmental health officers echo your leader (November 24) on the need for an independent and effective Food Standards Agency, but to be effective, it must be a statutory agency. Michael Cook, Chief executive, Institute of Environmental Health.

The old religion of nuclear deterrence is dying, but it could still exact an appalling human sacrifice

## Shrines to destruction

Martin Woolcott



WHEN a religion is in decline there may be a long period when, even though its temples empty and its priests turn apostate, the tenets of belief are still haltingly and hollowly observed. So it is with the religion of nuclear deterrence. Thousands of missile silos, shrines to destruction, are still powered and manned, nuclear-armed submarines still quarter the oceans, the scriptures are still studied in war ministries and staff colleges, and there are still converts, in the shape of an India, a Pakistan, or an Iraq, who wish to

join the elect. Yet nuclear deterrence, as a belief system, is close to collapse in the countries where it was invented.

Many of the generals who commanded nuclear forces, the politicians who were involved in nuclear decision-making, and the intellectuals who tried to create doctrines for the use of nuclear weapons have now repudiated deterrence, wholly or in part. Those who now devise or advocate nuclear weapons programmes are usually media men, time servers, or careerists, like the third rate scientists responsible for the Indian and Pakistani tests. Or they are politicians — like some in Russia, who see in nuclear weapons a currency that can buy continued great power status after economic and conventional military strength has dwindled away.

The terrible truth about this decayed religion is that it retains the capacity to exact unimaginable sacrifices from the human race.

True, the nightmare of a huge exchange of weapons between Russia and the United

States may now be very distant. It has been replaced in Western countries, but at a much lower level of awareness, by anxieties over proliferation, and over the acquisition of nuclear weapons by terrorists or by "rogue states" like Iraq.

But, on the whole, the public in developed countries acts either as if nuclear weapons had already been abolished or as if the maintenance of these arsenals was a safe procedure. The political and military establishments, meanwhile, act as if these weapons were as necessary as they ever were. They may not really believe it, but the habit of belief remains intact, largely because assessing deterrence in the degenerate form in which it now exists requires a revolution in understanding the history of the last 50 years, an effort which is only just beginning to be made.

What is left is the muddled idea that since nuclear deterrence supposedly "worked" in the past, it still "works" today.

When this notion is challenged, even in a small way,

Washington, the Vatican of deterrence, reacts with anger. The German defence minister, Rudolf Scharping, has consequently had to equivocate on his coalition's argument that Nato should adopt a No First Use policy. Germany would do nothing unilaterally, he said after meetings in Washington this week. Yet a proper American response would have been to say that such a move was eminently worth exploring during the discussions about a new strategic concept for the alliance, which are going on in preparation for the 50th anniversary summit of Nato in April next year.

The refusal to embrace No First Use of nuclear weapons in the past was based on Nato's need to be able to respond to Soviet conventional superiority. That conventional advantage has not only disappeared, but been replaced by a Western conventional superiority — to such an extent that Russia abandoned its own No First Use pledge in 1993.

It is hard to say which country is being more irrational. Neither faces any threat

to which the appropriate response would be the first use of nuclear weapons. Certainly not from each other, and, as to other possibilities, would even the use by Saddam Hussein, say, of a biological or chemical weapon, justify firing nuclear missiles at Iraq?

WASHINGTON'S resistance to German ideas is no doubt less to do with the No First Use debate than with the fact that No First Use leads on naturally to other measures of disarmament, like the withdrawal of the tactical nuclear weapons still deployed in Europe.

Not that the nuclear powers are against arms reductions. The Pentagon, it was revealed this week, may well go ahead with unilateral reductions of its nuclear forces in the event that the Russians fail to ratify the Start-II treaty in the near future. The weapons, it seems, cost too much.

The problem here, as Jonathan Schell points out in his new book, *The Gift of Time*, is that arms reductions have been part of the game of deterrence for many years. They

were and are aimed at preserving the deterrent in a "safer" form rather than abolishing it.

This is a critical and intricate question, as Schell demonstrates in his book. While advocates of arms reductions and advocates of abolition can work together, there is a sharp distinction between real disarmament and those who propose only a certain "tidying up" of the deterrent, to make accidents less likely and to appease non-nuclear powers.

Even between those who want the deepest of cuts and those who want abolition there is ultimately a very important difference. Extreme reductions may call for the standing down, the disassembly, or the destruction of all weapons, with only a residual capacity to reconstitute nuclear forces remaining. Abolition, on the other hand, involves complete renunciation, with no road back to weapons envisaged.

Would that we were at the stage where such arguments could be joined in practice rather than only in theory. But we are stuck in Cold War

mud. The men and women involved in Schell's book, most of whom held important positions in the nuclear establishment, offer different solutions to the problem of nuclear weapons. But all are agreed that present doctrine is a palsied hold-over from the past.

The only difference is that the names of previous enemies have been rubbed out and such formulations as "a rogue state", "terrorists", or "Russia... should circumstances change for the worse" as the British defence review put it, are filled in instead.

The former US ambassador, Thomas Graham, led the successful American campaign to persuade non-nuclear states to indefinitely extend the Non-Proliferation Treaty. He recently wrote to Nato leaders — including Tony Blair — that the non-proliferation regime will be in "grave danger" if Nato continues "to assign a high value to nuclear weapons, for instance as an essential bulwark of Alliance cohesion".

Instead Nato ought to be moving toward No First Use, the de-alerting of tactical nu-

clear weapons preparatory to their abolition, and an end to nuclear sharing.

As Schell's title implies, we have been given time to deal with the nuclear menace, and have already wasted much of it. Clinton, the president who could have championed disarmament, did not do so, partly because of his difficult relations with the military.

But the essence of the situation is that the days when the nuclear deterrent, apart from being justified by what seemed to be a manifest threat, was sincerely defended by able generals, formidable intellectuals, and powerful politicians are over.

It is with us still because of institutional inertia and a lingering refusal to understand that something so powerful can be without use or value. The deterrent for which we should be aiming, as Schell writes, is "the fear of returning to a nuclear-armed world" that "would always stand guard over the treaty by which the world had eliminated nuclear weapons".

*The Gift of Time*, Jonathan Schell (Granta).



# Saturday opinion

Do-gooders are against Turkey. But there's a pro-Turk view too

## The other extradition

Norman Stone

**A**n interesting question: compare the fate of General Pinochet, aged 63, and Comrade "Apo" Ocalan, aged 48. Pinochet faces extradition. Ocalan, who has led the Kurdish PKK since its foundation 20 years ago, has waged a terrorist war in south eastern Turkey. Of course, he claims the usual indulgence for terrorism, but he has personally been charged with murder, in Germany, where four defectors from his organisation were killed. He is wanted on a red Interpol list, at the behest of the German government. He fled to Italy, requested political asylum, and has not been made to face justice there — instead, there he sits, in a comfortable home near Rome. Has the Italian state a soft spot for murderers? In 1985, PLO men hijacked a cruise ship, the Achille Lauro. An elderly, crippled tourist, a wheelchair, berated them. He was shot, and dumped over the side, wheelchair and all. The four killers were later arrested in Italy. They "escaped" while "on leave" from prison. Now, it seems, the Italian state is at it again. It will not extradite Ocalan to Turkey. This is a strange contrast with British behaviour over Pinochet.

The problem is that Ocalan himself is hugely complicating a difficult enough situation. The PKK claims to speak for "the Kurds", and there is in some quarters an easy acceptance of this claim. But most of his victims have been Kurds. One of his one-time lieuten-

less strict, and in the past, whenever a Kurdish rebellion occurred, they took different sides. There is also a vast linguistic divide. According to the best anthropological account, Martin van Bruinessen's *Agas, Sheikhs and States*, there are seven Kurdish languages, and in Turkey the speakers of the Zaza and Kurmanji variants understand each other, if at all, only with great difficulty. In Northern Iraq, there are two chief Kurdish formations, but they, too, are divided by language, the eastern group speaking a language much influenced by Iranian. This problem is shown by the PKK's very own television station, Med-TV, which broadcasts mainly in Turkish, and otherwise mainly uses Arabic or even Iranian. If you go round Kurdish districts, you find that, the younger the people, the more they will use Turkish among themselves.

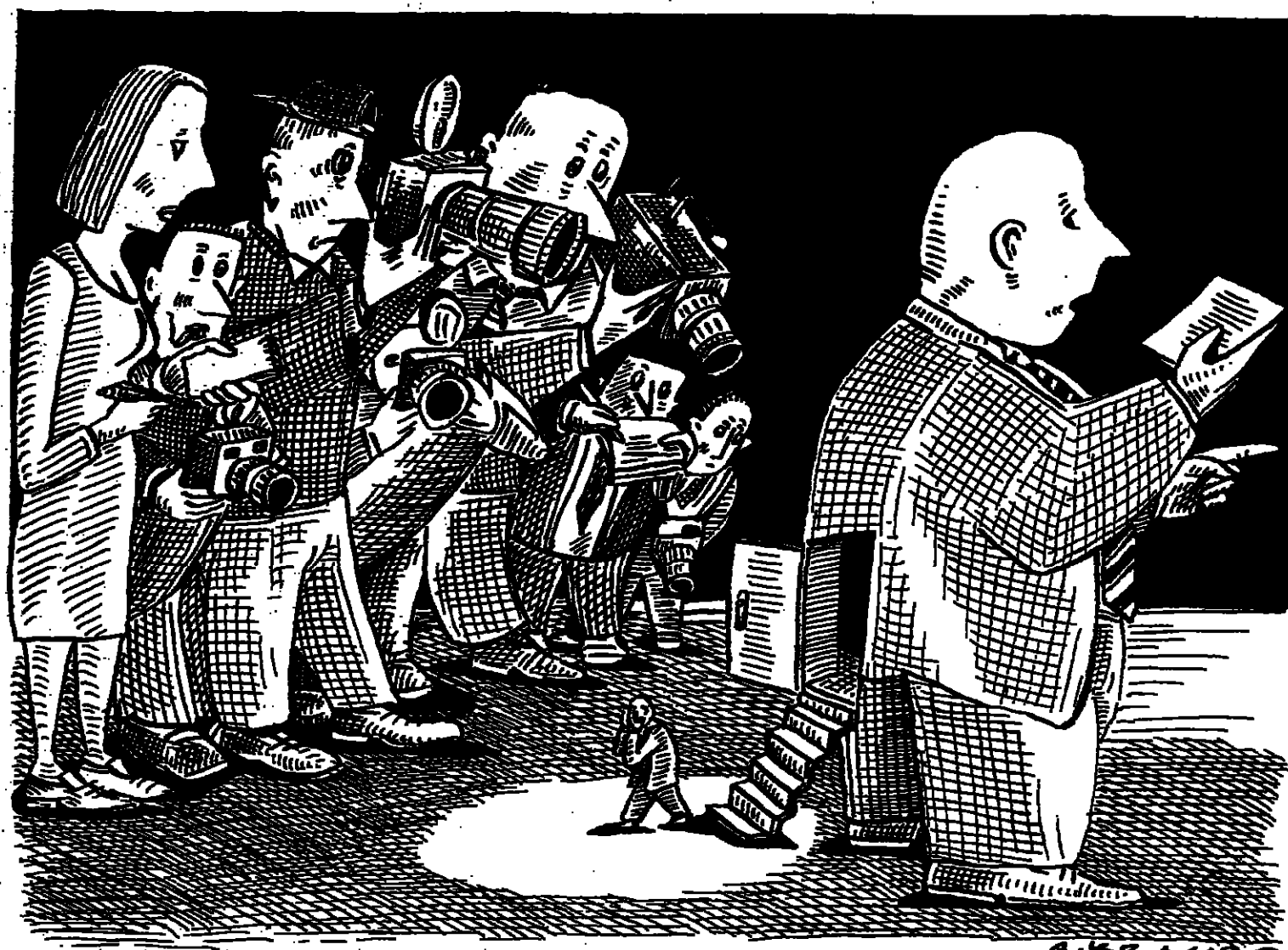
**T**HERE is a further problem — children. It is still the done thing for a man to marry four times and to produce as many children as possible; there is a teenage bride to take care of the initial hormones, a further bride for the early 20s, a third for the late 20s, and a fourth for old age. This, of course, compounds the problem of poverty, according to the Turkish army, the PKK recruits from the sons of the first marriage, embittered, and with a mother who comes last in the queue for the father's favours.

Besides, millions of Kurds in Turkey have been prospering in western and even central Anatolia. According to the latest book, written by Henry Barkey and Graham Fuller (which is not favourable to the Turkish government's position) one-third of the politicians themselves are of Kurdish origin, there are countless successful Kurdish businessmen, and though the scale of the Kurdish problem is evident in the shanty-town outskirts of any of the big cities of the west, there is no doubt that most Kurds just look for continued association with the Turkish state. In any opinion poll, people will answer "Turkish" as their nationality, even where they also claim some sort of Kurdish antecedents. This is reflected in elections, where the political party associated with Kurdish rights — HADEP — gains very few votes outside the south-eastern regions. The PKK is a terrorist organisation with links to gangland

The PKK is a terrorist organisation with links to gangland

ants, Selim Çirikkaya, wrote his memoirs (*PKK — Die Diktatur des Abdullah Ocalan*). Ocalan is a Communist, complete with hammer and sickle, and he runs the PKK in Stalinist style, complete with executions and purge trials. You are not even allowed to cross your legs in his camps, says Selim Çirikkaya, as it might be taken for a sign of disrespect; he himself was imprisoned by Ocalan, and managed, with great difficulty, to get away, through Beirut. Other defectors have not been so lucky, most of them Kurdish intellectuals. In 1993, Ocalan broke a ceasefire, and killed 20 unarmed young conscripts in a bus. A particularly horrible case involved two young primary schoolteachers, who had gone to the south east out of idealism — being education to the backward east. They were killed. The newly-married wife of one was going to be spared, but she asked to be killed as well, and the PKK obliged.

**T**HE PKK is a terrorist organisation with links to gangland and its aim is the creation of a Maoist state in areas of Turkey and Iraq. Such movements can talk the language of "national liberation", and gain credibility in serious circles. But there is not a Kurdish Question: there are several. The Kurds have had a rather tragic history. They lived scattered among four different states, and in the recent past most were nomads, with a feudal social structure. In Turkey, they are divided by religion — many are not orthodox Muslims, but Alevi, far



## Inner lives

Julia Langdon

**T**HE Tory minister's telephone call came at midnight. He sounded desperate. He had been thrown over by a girlfriend and needed to speak about it with another woman, preferably not his wife. There was talk of suicide, although that seemed to be mostly for dramatic effect, a measure of his misery and self-pity — and anyway after an hour or so he rang off, slightly, more cheerful. He didn't die. We never mentioned it again.

I was giving the Labour minister a lift for some reason that I don't recall. We may well have been out to dinner, talking about politics, but in the dark in the car he started talking about his private life. We got back to the House of Commons and I pulled up outside St Stephen's entrance and he sat in the passenger seat and told me all about it and cried. I said: "There, there", and put a comforting hand on his shoulder, and after a bit, when he had recovered his customary poise, we said goodnight. I don't think we ever related to it again.

I relate these incidents not in order to draw attention to the perhaps unsuspected role of the lobby correspondent as samaritan, but to address the difficult subject of where one draws the line about what it is proper to report as a journalist. The first arises because of recent disclosures, post Claydon Common. It has been said that Peter Mandelson may or may not have done in his spare time in Brazil, made in a disgraceful fashion in *Punch* magazine, while a bit of top spin was added by an even more disgraceful reference to "Lord Mandelson of Rio" by a desperate William Hague in the House of Commons.

There are those who are saying that in politics you need people who are prepared to fight dirty and that this particular initiative by the Leader of the Opposition was the first indication that he was deserving of his post. I disagree. I hold no brief for Mr. Mandelson on whom, I am delighted to say, I rely for absolutely nothing except the efficient management of Britain's trade and industry and whose approach to news management I abhor. But as far as I am a journalist am concerned, his private life — as with that of any other MP — is entirely his own affair. The question is at what point does this self-defending ordinance no longer hold?

I did not report the suicidal love victim or the sobbing socialist, and this was not only because they were/are both friends of mine. I might have made headlines for five minutes — but both continued subsequently to talk to me about political matters which I could write about — and in the knowledge that they could trust me. Their careers and their marriages have not visibly suffered, indeed both men secured considerable promotion after the events that I refer to here, which they would most certainly not have done had I exposed their human frailty. Neither did I

In the gay porn basement the minister asked for a video called 'Barrack Room Gloryhole IV'. But I didn't report it.

## PR is a dead duck, and soon Paddy Ashdown may be too

### Down with Roy

Matthew Engel

**I**T is well-known that the sub-editors on the Times before the war held a Boring Headline competition, which was won by Claud Cockburn with the two-decker: SMALL BARTLE QUAKE IN CHILL: NOT MANY DEAD. (The American equivalent is always considered to be a travel piece headed something like CANADA: FRIENDLY GIANT TO THE NORTH.)

In a week when even the Law Lords have conspired to make Chile thrilling, it is with some hesitation that one utters what Britons beyond question regard as the most boring phrase of the late 20th century: proportional representation. Could those of you rushing for the exits please leave quietly, thank you. Mr. Ashdown might still be listening.)

It is true, by the way, that if Chile had had PR in 1970, the name Pinochet would now mean nothing. President Allende took power with barely a third of the votes, pursued a red-blooded left-wing agenda regardless, and sent the CIA crackers. Had the system demanded a majority, a safe soft-centrist would have been elected. And Pinochet would probably have retired

from the military and become secretary of a golf club — though one would not have cared to be the member who failed to replace a divot. But Britain is not Chile. When we elect a leftist government on a far stronger mandate than Allende had, we get one scared to say boo to a small shopkeeper, or indeed a clapped-out Chilean dictator. Britain has no overwhelming need for proportional representation. There is no demand in the political class the Conservatives are against it as bloc, as is the overwhelming majority of the Labour Party. And, heaven knows, there is no demand among the country at large.

The arguments for and against are irrelevant. It is simply the way it happens. Tony Blair may well keep his promise of a referendum. But it will probably be tackled on to something else. And there are ways of putting these things: "Do you want to join in a new super-duper currency or do you want to be left behind like the Tories?"

Politicians — however they are elected — must pursue the possible. And Mr Blair does not have the political capital to expand on an indulgence which offers him no clear gain whatever. Anyone who had an early enough breakfast at the Labour conference this year to hear the tucked-away debate on electoral reform could sense that there is mighty opposition among the activists. The Government upsets them enough to pursue its real goals. Why on earth should it upset them just to keep Mr Ashdown sweet?

It might have been a fraction easier if Lord Jenkins had offered a more attractive suggestion for change. Why could he have come out for the

alternative vote, the one where everything stays the same except you vote 1,2,3 and can put the Tories last behind the yonic fliers and the Loonies. But he added to that the "top-up" system of extra MPs. He has achieved intellectual elegance, and indeed fairness to the Conservatives, but at the expense of political clarity, which makes failure certain.

The Government is already making a hash of constitutional reform. Even at his most high-minded, Mr Blair always seems power-crazed. He has even conceded some of the moral high ground to the hereditary peers, which was

if there is no obvious young successor, Charles Kennedy is held to be sick and should resign. Simon Hughes disorganised and disloyal; and compared to Nick Harvey, most of the Conservative front-bench would count as A-list celebrities. Actually, anyone who has heard Menzies Campbell — senatorial of voice and mien — might think there was an alternative.

Campbell, Scottish advocate and retired sprint champion, is generally dismissed as too old (57, three months younger than Ashdown), and a touch rightwing. But they can paper over the last bit. And with life expectancy rising and the population aging, it beats me why our leaders are expected to keep getting younger and younger. Surely the Tories have now tested that idea to destruction. A party leader who was fresh but not callow might come over as rather appealing. A party which carries on bleating about proportional representation will not.

**LIST OF THE WEEK:** From the Liberal herd of Cornwall, Lismaster David McKie brings back the front page of a newspaper circulating in the southernmost communities of our nation.

"The Helston and The Lizard Briton," it announces, "covers Ashton, Breage, Cadgwith, Coverack, Cury, Garra, Germa, Gweek, Gunwalloe, Helford, Helston, St Keverne, The Lizard, Manaccan, Saint Martin, Mawgan, Mullion, Praa Sands, Porthallow, Porthleven, Ruan Minor, Stoney, Wendron."

The current system has a vengeful certainty. Ask Michael Portillo

inept. It would be unbelievably crass to waste time on a turkey like the Jenkins Report.

The current British system, for all its faults, has a deliciously vengeful certainty. Ask Michael Portillo. A politician has to find a constituency that will elect him or push off.

The public like that: it is the one power we have to check the growth of a perpetual elite. Meanwhile, the Liberal Democrats continue to act as though PR were not merely a handy device to twist the system in their favour, but a moral crusade. Mr Ashdown has got himself in a deeply maddening situation, just when his party has been handed an historic opportunity to establish itself as a serious alternative.

He isn't indispensable, even

report at the time the hilarious events at an Irish party when a strippergram, purporting to be a traffic warden, took her clothes off to the bra and suspenders level and then required a distinguished person present to remove a telegram with his teeth from the top of her stockings. And I am afraid it was I who called out: "It's a copy of the Anglo-Irish Agreement", thus causing an even more distinguished person present to deliver a powerful speech on the bloodstained history of the past 800 years, the insult that was being done to the memory of those who had lived and died in this cause, and then to storm out of the house. I would have ruined several careers, in my view undeservedly, if I had reported any of this. Am I the worse journalist?

**A**ND no, I have never reported that a gay friend of mine lolling in Soho one summer afternoon saw another high-profile "happy married" Conservative former minister descend the steps to a gay porn basement. My friend, out of idle curiosity, followed him. He heard that what this man wanted was a video called "Barrack Room Glory Hole IV". Alas, it had not then apparently arrived in the shops so he made do with — well, it doesn't matter because I wouldn't like to use the phrase (of which I had myself never heard until then, anyway) in a family newspaper. I saw the former minister last week at a party and we brushed cheeks, but unless he reads this column, he has no idea I know any of this.

I can be trusted but does that make me a trusty? It doesn't mean you never write anything worthwhile. The original story about the dubious state of the finances of the Duchess of York, broken by the Sun, came from me. I am a freelance journalist. I sold the story to the Sun, thus unashamedly shooting the wolves a little further down my street while at the same time protecting my source.

Working at Westminster one is inevitably privy to endless items of gossip, only a small proportion of which are probably true. Of course it is necessary to establish the truth if politicians can be shown to be failing in the execution of their jobs, either as ministers or towards their constituents. The journalist has a clear duty to expose hypocrisy if a politician says one thing and does another. But in my view that duty also extends to the need to protect not only your sources, but individual politicians from themselves — and not expose anyone just for the sake of a few minutes of professional gratification.

Julia Langdon has been political editor at both the Mirror and the Sunday Telegraph

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Nicholas Kurti

# The last word in cool

PROFESSOR Nicholas Kurti, who has died aged 90, was one of the brilliant Hungarians who, having trained in Berlin and started a research career in Breslau in the early 1930s, sought refuge in Britain, with other colleagues escaping from the emerging Nazi regime. Here and in the United States he worked on the atomic bomb project — and was briefly and falsely suspected of spying by the American military.

He went on to achieve world fame in the 1950s as joint designer of a cooling experiment at Oxford University that came within a millionth of a degree of absolute zero. An accomplished cook and gourmet, he was a man of old-world courtesy and elegance, who attained popular acclaim in the 1960s through the wit, dry humour and gourmet's delight with which he brought physics into home cooking.

Reader and then professor of physics at Oxford from 1960 to his retirement in 1975, Kurti was an immensely dedicated and highly focused scientist. Although superficially quiet, his implicit and rapid-like erudition was always ready to impale those who blundered or failed to do their homework. Yet, in relaxation, he could become wholly immersed in enjoyment of the full breadth of life's cultural and culinary pleasures. He was in many ways the archetypal, if old-fashioned, whole man.

A Royal Society Fellows' anthology of food and drink *But the Cracking is Superb*, which he and his wife Giana assembled in 1968, went into its fifth reprint in 1997, thus attaining the improbable — some might say paradoxical — distinction of becoming one of the most successful books ever published by the Institute of Physics. It grew from a discourse entitled *The Physicist in the Kitchen* given by Kurti in 1965 at the Royal Institution in London.

Lord Porter, then Sir George Porter and director of the Royal Institution, recalled that the discourse broke with tradition in several ways. It was televised, and because of his need to prepare his "kitchen" the lecturer was not locked up to prevent his escape — as had been traditional since Sir Charles Wheatstone had fled with stage-right a century earlier. When the discourse ended, a drooping audience descended

on the lecturer's bench like locusts, devouring every morsel of the feast that Kurti had prepared.

One of the highlights of the lecture was a large soufflé studied with thermocouples measuring the temperature at all depths as it cooked. "It is a sad reflection on our civilisation," Kurti commented, "that, while we can and do measure the temperature in the atmosphere of the planet Venus, we have no real idea of what goes on inside our soufflés."

Such unexpected and amiable home-spun philosophy was typical of Kurti, yet his scientific career was built around the physics and physical effects of extremely low temperatures, far below those of Earth or Venus. Born in Budapest, he took his first degree at the University of Budapest when only 18, a physics degree at the University of Paris two years later.

He developed new magnetic cooling techniques, enabling him to experiment at temperatures only a few hundredths of a degree above absolute zero

and his doctorate at Berlin in 1931.

His thesis, *The Thermal and Magnetic Properties of Gadolinium Sulphate*, stimulated enormous interest because it confirmed the possibility of attaining temperatures well below those of liquid helium. Low temperatures were not being sought for their own sake, but as a means of investigating atomic behaviour and lattice structure within solids, such as crystals.

Kurti was promptly invited to Niels Bohr's laboratory in Breslau, where his fellow post-doctoral workers were Franz (later Sir Frank) Simon and Kurt Mendelssohn. The intention was to mount a series of ultra-low-temperature experiments. However, there was already an upsurge of anti-Jewish activity in Germany and, as Mendelssohn

later explained, things were rapidly getting worse. "One day, as we left the university, we had to duck bullets flying through the streets of Breslau and heralding the approach of Nazi rule. It became clear that the cooling experiments would have to be deferred a little."

Franz Simon had been invited to the Clarendon Laboratory in Oxford by another of Niels Bohr's students, F.A. Lindemann (later Lord Cherwell, wartime scientific adviser to Churchill). Two other German Jewish refugees, Fritz and Heinz London, were already at the Clarendon working on the theory of superconductivity. It was a phenomenon of ultra-low temperatures, far below those of Earth or Venus. Persuaded by the continuing rattle of gunfire, Nicholas Kurti, Kurt Mendelssohn, and Franz Simon left Breslau in some haste and, before the end of 1933, with the aid of a Rockefeller grant and a new helium liquefier, initiated a low-temperature research programme at the Clarendon Laboratory.

Between 1933 and 1939, Kurti developed new magnetic cooling techniques, enabling him to carry out experiments at temperatures only a few hundredths of a degree above absolute zero, determining physical properties which had hitherto been beyond investigation. En route he identified a number of new superconducting metals. The outbreak of war brought an abrupt end to this research programme and, with many other physicists, Kurti was swept into the British Tube Alloys atomic bomb programme, steered by the Maud Committee.

The Clarendon group had turned to the problems of isotope separation early in 1940. During the summer, following an approach through the university, because of the war, not to be approached directly by the government to carry out secret work, all research on the development of gaseous diffusion for the separation of uranium-235 was handed over to them.

By December, Simon — already a professor, and leader of the group — had produced and costed a design for a practical separation plant, while Kurti had demonstrated ways of producing large areas of membrane whose pores were about one ten thousandth of a millimetre in diameter — a problem which had defeated industry.



Domestic science... Nicholas Kurti's technique for preparing a marinade of pork

The Oxford group went on to build practical, if experimental, separation units.

Both Kurti and Simon were with the British Tube Alloys mission which went to the US in 1941 to join the Manhattan Project, constructing an atomic bomb. When the mission returned in 1944, Nicholas Kurti remained at Columbia University in New York, setting up membrane testing for the Kellogg Corporation, which built the atomic weapons separation plant.

Klaus Fuchs and Rudolf Peierls, both in the theoretical physics team at Los Alamos, also stayed behind in New York. At this time the American military were becoming increasingly worried about Soviet penetration, and feared that the British team might conceal a Soviet agent. With many others, Kurti came under suspicion until Fuchs was uncovered. But Fuchs was not alone. Igor Gouzenko, a Soviet cypher clerk who defected from the Ottawa embassy in 1945, revealed that Alan Nunn May — a British physicist at Chalk

River in Canada who had formal access to the secret atomic work in the Chicago and New York laboratories — had passed samples of plutonium membrane and uranium-235 to Soviet contacts.

BACK at Oxford in 1946, Nicholas Kurti returned to his speciality of physics, developing techniques which made experimentation possible at temperatures ever closer to absolute zero, and eventually becoming professor and director of the Mullard Cryogenic Laboratory within the Clarendon Laboratory. In 1956, employing new nuclear cooling techniques, he led the group whose experiments reached temperatures a thousand times lower than had been achieved earlier — that is to a temperature only one millionth of a degree above absolute zero.

Kurti exploited the technique to investigate the behaviour of atomic nuclei and developed parallel methods of cooling electrons to extremely

low temperatures. By the time of his retirement in 1975, his elegant and original experimental methods of attaining extremely low temperatures were being taken up by laboratories throughout the world.

Elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1956, Nicholas Kurti became vice-president 1965-67, serving at other times on the Royal Society council and on the councils of the Institute of Physics, the French Physics Society and the European Physical Society. He won awards and fellowships from many countries, including the Hughes Medal of the Royal Society in 1969.

In 1946, on his return from America, he married Giana Shipley. There are two daughters.

Anthony Tucker

Professor Nicholas Kurti, low temperature physicist and gourmet, born May 14, 1908; died November 24, 1998

Anthony Tucker completed this obituary shortly before his own death

Face to Faith

## I'm more than my genes

RECENT claims to have identified a gene for tallness invite the question, what next? Are we to expect a constant stream of announcements as one human characteristic after another is traced back to its genetic origins, and what we think of as our humanity is revealed in all its starkness as complex chemistry? It is obvious that the enormous resources now being put into genetic research will tell us a lot more about ourselves. It is also inherent in the nature of science not to set limits on what might be discovered. But are there limits to what genetics can explain?

Genetic systems are often mistakenly described as blueprints. The essence of a blueprint is that there is a simple one-to-one relationship between what is on the plan and what is constructed from it. The discovery of genes for tallness, or eye colour, or whatever, tends to reinforce the blueprint image, but the reality is actually much less straightforward. Genes act more like bundles of instructions, setting in motion and controlling a process whose end result will depend in part on what else is happening. The fact that many of these instructions are closely linked with each other makes it extremely difficult to foretell what the result of changing any one of them is likely to be.

In more precise terms, genes manufacture proteins and enzymes, which in turn react with other proteins and enzymes to build cells, organs and bodies. Other factors enter into this process, notably the geometrical properties of the proteins themselves, the supply of raw materials, and the environment in which it all takes place. In a tightly controlled environment, such as the embryo, and with suitable nutrition, the results are fairly predictable. But once an infant leaves the uterus, the number and variety of other influences impinging on it are huge, and all are likely to play their part in shaping the kind of person that infant will become. If genes were blueprints, fantasies about producing an identical clone of oneself would not be absurd. But because they are instructions within a process which does not depend wholly on the genes themselves, the making of identical copies is not a practical possibility.

Identical twins who have shared the same environment both inside and outside the womb provide the closest approach to ideal clones, but even they frequently differ in the kind of people they are, and make deliberate choices about how far they are going to emphasise their likeness. The main interest in human genetic manipulation centres at present on the possibility of correcting defects in individual genes known to be responsible for two thousand or so serious hereditary diseases. To be lastingly effective the corrections would have to be made at the early embryonic stage, and there are major ethical worries about permitting this degree of interference in somebody's life.

Lord Habgood, the former Archbishop of York, is the author of *Being a Person* (Hodder and Stoughton)

### A Country Diary

NAIROBI: So influenced are we by television wildlife documentaries, that the notion of British wildlife being portrayed as endangered as, say, Chinook salmon in British Columbia, or the various species of rhinoceros, seems incongruous. However, four Yorkshire-based members of Wildlife Watch, the junior wing of the Wildlife Trusts, revealed the reality at the International Children's Conference on the Environment held here over the past three days. About 400 delegates were told, have disappeared from around two thirds of their former sites in England. They are under threat from habitat loss and predation by mink. Whilst the African sun shone brightly outside, the youngsters from Yorkshire explained how they have surveyed streams and rivers for this once common rodent. They talked also about cleaning up streams and reducing the risk that habitats face from landfill waste disposal sites and of the need for greater efforts at reducing, re-using and recycling our waste materials.

PETE BOWLER

when there can be no certainty about what further consequences it might have.

Single defects in single genes, however, are child's play compared with the uncertainties likely to be encountered when more than one gene is involved, and when complex human characteristics are the target. Claims have been made about genes for aspects of social behaviour, such as aggressiveness, alcoholism, or homosexuality, but even if a genetic link is established, the effects are likely to amount to no more than a propensity to behave in certain ways, given the enormous number of other factors influencing what people do. Moreover, even if such propensities were found to be dependent on single genes, there are far too many steps, both biological and social, between a gene and a form of conduct to justify any claim that one completely determines the other.

Genetic determinism makes no sense in creatures as complex, as open to our environment, and as dependent on social interaction as human beings have always shown themselves to be. But scientific talk about genes for this or that can be very seductive. Unless its limitations are made clear, its tendency in the long run is to undermine moral responsibility and our sense of independent personhood. As genetic knowledge expands, and as medical techniques proliferate for manipulating or replacing some of our most vital bodily functions, the question: "What is a person?" becomes more urgent. We need ways of understanding ourselves more comprehensively, bridging the gulfs between different academic disciplines. We need to relate the scientific story to the story of inner experience and human culture, and to acknowledge the potential of language in enabling us to explore and invent other realms of being.

MY CONVICTION that this is an urgent task has been my excuse for spending a year of my retirement writing a book which tries to link such themes with a believable theology. Our genes set the scene for what we are. They are the basis of the given reality of our bodily nature, with all its potentialities and constraints. As human beings, we are unique in the degree to which these different capacities can be used in different ways.

What we do with them depends to a large extent on the relationships, physical, personal, and ultimately transcendental, within which our lives develop. But from the start our capacity for reflection, for standing back from our immediate situation, gives us the power of choice. The more we accept responsibility for what we are, the greater our freedom. To blame our genes when things go wrong is to diminish ourselves.

Lord Habgood, the former Archbishop of York, is the author of *Being a Person* (Hodder and Stoughton)

### Death Notices

HEWLETT, Margaret Mary Theresa, formerly of Sheffield, 36th November, buried at the Church of St. Andrew, 1st December, 1998. She was the wife of the late Patrick Hewlett, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, a respected teacher, an energetic and generous person and friend to many. Funeral at 11.00am, 1st December, 1998.

JONES, Wynford Gray, of Llanelli, 30th November, aged 74, beloved father of Janet and Sallie, husband of Joan and grandfather of Christopher, David, Emily and John. All enquiries to Cooper & Son Funeral Services, 42 High Street, Llanelli, SA20 8JL. Tel: 01792 565656. No flowers, donations if wished, to St. Barnard's, c/o Cooper & Son.

McNULTY, Miss, age 92, died 26th November, 1998. She was the wife of the late Mr. James McNulty, who died 24th November, 1998. Funeral at 11.00am, 2nd December, 1998. No flowers.

Place your own advertisement telephone 0171 73 4000 or fax 0171 73 4000 between 9am and 5pm Mon-Fri.

### Roland Alphonso

## In the front line of ska

AS LEADER of the Skatalites, the tenor saxophonist Roland Alphonso, who has died aged 67, was one of the innovators of ska, but in a career that spanned more than half a century he contributed to every phase of Jamaican pop.

It was in the early 1950s that Alphonso and his peers came up with ska as a beat that recast jazz and rhythm & blues within the African-Jamaican traditions of mento, mento and revivalism. Ska became the backbone of the independence movement, celebrated as distinctly Jamaican.

Clement "Sir Coxsone" Dodd was the most successful of Kingston's ska producers. His preference for Alphonso's style meant the saxophonist became a regular fixture at Dodd's sessions. It was partly Alphonso's arranging skills that made the producer's Studio One the island's premier recording studio.

In June 1964 the Skatalites were formed as Studio One's house band. They backed every artist of note there, including Jimmy Cliff, Marcia Griffiths, Lee Perry, Toots and the Maytals and Ken Boothe. Roland and guitarist Ernest Ranglin gave texture to Bob Marley and the Wailers' earliest work. The Skatalites' recordings — like *Malcolm X*, *Christie's Koolhaas*, *Castro*, their cover of *Guns of Navarone* — defined ska, and numerous hits were cut for Dodd and rival producers Prince Buster, King Edwards and Justin Yapp. But by August 1965 the group had split: fellow saxophonist Tommy McCook formed the



Alphonso... innovator

Supersonics while Coxsone retained Alphonso and keyboardist Jackie Mittoo as the Soul Brothers. Renamed Soul Vendors in 1967, the group had a highly successful British tour.

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In the buoyant postwar years, Alphonso passed through several leading Jamaican jazz bands, including Redvert Cook's Orchestra and Eric Dean's Band. He concentrated on alto sax in this

period, and was rated the nation's second best player after Joe Hight.

Alphonso later joined the house band at Coney Island, a Kingston waterfront gambling arena. There he excelled on tenor sax. In the mid-1950s he played on some of the earliest recordings made in Jamaica, cutting his first work on mento 78s. Then came ska.

In the 1970s Alphonso made contemplative solo albums for Studio One and subsequently arranged hit producer Bunny Lee's material. Roland's efforts earned him the Order of Distinction in 1977.

As Jamaica was torn by political violence, Alphonso moved to New York. There he recorded progressive material with Lloyd "Bullwinkle" Barnes in the early 1980s and eventually settled in Queens, New York City.

In 1994, the Skatalites reformed with the acclaimed *Return of the Big Guns* album. Several other albums were cut in the US, and the group continued a rigorous touring schedule, which included a 1998 Japanese tour. Recent dates at London's Jazz Cafe were well received, and Alphonso was active until the end. It was while playing in a Hollywood nightclub that he had the seizure that led to his death.

He is survived by Harmine, his wife of 38 years, six children and several grandchildren.

David Katz

Roland Alphonso, musician, born January 12, 1931; died November 20, 1998

### CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

IN A REPORT headed, *The King and I*, etc., Page 3, November 20, we said that Rama IV was the grandfather of the present king of Thailand, Rama IX. He is his great-grandfather. While it is true that Rama stood to an anthem in their cinemas before every screening it is not the national anthem, but the royal anthem that is used on

this occasion. Thailand has two separate anthems: one for the nation, the other for the monarch.

IN A GRAPHIC Page 11, Sport, November 21, the River Wye missed Hereford by quite a long way.

THE PHOTOGRAPH used on Page 3, G2, November 25, with

the lead feature, headlined *Pirates of piouetta*, was by Anthony Crickmay, and not as credited. Sorry.

HOMOPHONE: In *Dish of the Day*, Page 20, November 25, we spoke of "wrap concentration".

It is the policy of the Guardian to correct errors as soon as

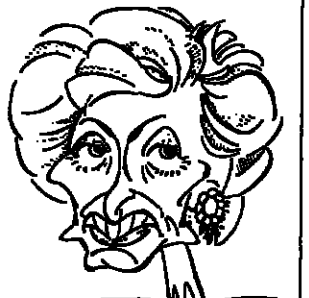
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### Weekend Birthdays

COMMON decency demands that we wish Dame Shirley Porter, 88 tomorrow, a happy birthday — but where to send the card? Is the 20th richest women in Europe in her lux-

ury Tel Aviv flat, her Palm Springs house, nursing her financial interests in Panama or Luxembourg, or mourning the 1,500 acres of Scotland she sold off this summer after it

emerged as the only asset (from an original total of £20-70 million) not transferred beyond the jurisdiction of the English courts. Nor, if our greeting does get through, will there be many people at the party — certainly not Westminster council tax payers still awaiting the return of the £27 million surcharge levied on the Dame two years ago for her "homes for votes" scheme to keep the city coun-



cil in Tory hands for ever. Dame Shirley's not the only friend of Lady Thatcher with birthdays this week and big trouble at hand. Expect developments in the Pinchot affair next week; Dame Shirley's appeal comes up in January.

Today's birthdays: Fiona Armstrong, television presenter, 42; Rita Mae Brown, novelist, 54; Eilean M Chaille, Irish poet and lecturer, 56; Alistair Darling MP, Secretary of State for Social Security, 45; John Galiano, fashion designer, 38; Lucy Gutteridge, actress, 42; Peter Leaver, QC, chief executive, FA Premier League, 54; Prof Claude Lévi-Strauss, social anthropologist, 90; Gordon Marsden, Labour MP, 45; Keith Miller, cricketer, 79; Dervla Murphy, novelist and travel writer, 67; Stephen Roche, former cycling champion, 35; Sir Ray Whitney, Conservative MP, 68.

Tomorrow's other birthdays: Kate Barker, chief economist, CBI, 41; Ryan Giggs, footballer, 25; Prof Sir Frank Rowland, literary critic, 79; John Mayall, rhythm and blues musician, 55; Prof David Rhind, geographer, vice-chancellor, City University, 55; David Rintoul, actor, 49; Dame Janet Smith, QC, high court judge, 58.

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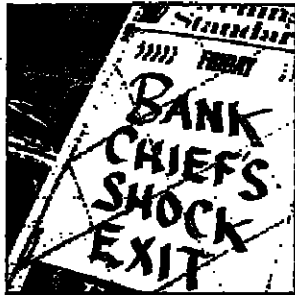
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# Finance Guardian



Barclay's Martin Taylor heads for the door before the world falls in. He has done it before.

Page 12

## Rover rescue plan



Men leaving Rover at Longbridge yesterday — the shop floor has yet to agree to the package of measures designed to save all the company's plants

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID BURNER

# Workers vote on BMW deal

Nicholas Bannister and David Gow

**R**OVER'S 39,000 workers will be asked next week to vote in favour of a rescue plan which will involve at least 2,500 job losses and radical changes to working practices.

A "yes" vote will lead to BMW, Rover's German owner, agreeing to invest up to £1.7 billion to rebuild the company's Longbridge plant and prepare it for production of the new Mini and a new medium-sized car. The deal, agreed in principle between Rover's management and union leaders, and conditionally approved by BMW on Thursday, will trigger a request for around £200 million of government aid.

Senior shop stewards, who have been involved in negotiating the deal, last night unanimously agreed to back the deal, raising the prospects that it will be accepted by the workforce.

Union negotiators have agreed to BMW's demands for job losses and flexible working throughout all Rover's plants which is designed to save the car company at least £150 million a year. Its losses this year are expected to be as much as £500 million.

However, the company has agreed to reduce the working week from 37 to 35 hours, and will attempt to achieve the job reductions through voluntary, rather than compulsory, redundancies.

The deal has yet to be approved by the company's 150 factory-floor shop stewards at a meeting early next week. They have been engaged in resistance to BMW's demands for German-style working practices and believed to be one of the main reasons the negotiations have dragged on so long.

## Firms to shed 1,000 workers

Nicholas Bannister, Chief Business Correspondent

**M**ORE THAN 1,000 job losses were announced yesterday by companies across the country. Northern textile makers Dewhurst Clothing said it was closing factories at Redcar, Cleveland and Tunstall, Stoke-on-Trent, with the loss of 600 jobs.

The company, which makes shirts for Marks & Spencer, said it had been forced to make the closures to remain competitive in the face of tough trading conditions throughout the country. A spokesman said the company was discussing the closures with employee representatives. Production at Redcar and Tunstall would be absorbed by other group factories, possibly including some overseas.

## Oil firm axes 200 London jobs

David Gow, Industrial Editor

**T**HE collapse in oil prices exerted another heavy toll yesterday when Lasmo, an independent oil explorer and producer, cut 60 per cent of its London staff and two senior executives in an extensive reorganisation.

Lasmo's move came hours before Exxon and Mobil confirmed that they are engaged in talks about a possible £143 billion merger, triggering a Wall Street surge in their shares.

Lasmo lost 25 million in the first half of this year and Mr Murray said second-half losses would be larger as the company's break-even point was at \$15 a barrel. Yesterday's cost-cutting plan should reduce that to \$14.

Joe Darby, Lasmo's chief executive, said: "We are convinced that Lasmo has a bright, independent future — if we take this drastic action."

## Battle to save the rump of a family brewery

Peter Hetherington

**I**T HAS been labelled a "titanic struggle" between faceless City money men and old-style patrician Tories anxious to preserve the rump of a family firm.

The two sides met yesterday to decide the fate of almost 800 jobs at the Vaux brewery in Sunderland and a smaller operation in Sheffield in the face of a mounting campaign by MPs, the local council, thousands of Weasiders — and, intriguingly, the family which established the company. Even the Prime Minister, whose nearby constituents rank Vaux Samsom as one of their favourite tipplers, has joined the fight.

At a tense meeting the board was finalising the sale of the breweries and up to 350 jobs, with the Carlsberg Trelleborg group apparently a City favourite for a deal, said to be worth around £60 million. It would undoubtedly close the breweries.

But the alternative bid, favoured by the Campaign for Real Ale and seemingly everyone else in the North East, comes from the brewery managing director, Frank Nicholson, who hopes to lead a management buy-out.

For generations, the Nicholsons have been running Vaux, founded in 1837, withstanding numerous takeover bids over the past decade.

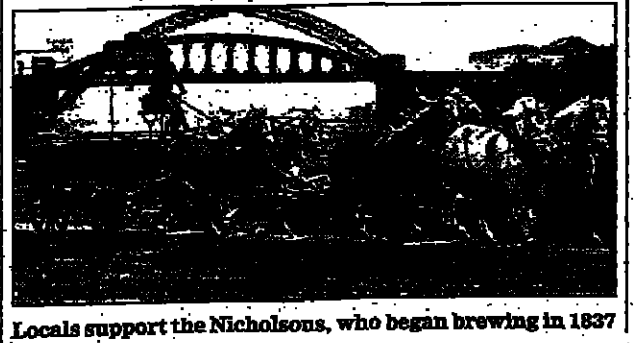
Only two years ago Sir Paul Nicholson, Frank's elder brother, the group chairman and doyen of the community, forcefully reminded shareholders: "Closing plants and putting people out of work does not appeal to Vaux."

But problems apparently began with the recent arrival of a new chief executive, Martin Grant, from the drinks group Allied Domecq.

Frank Nicholson told his workers that the board had accepted a recommendation from Mr Grant that it should "concentrate on developing a modern leisure company". That meant expanding the Swallow Hotels chain at the expense of brewing.

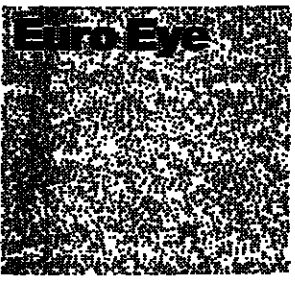
Reading between the lines, workers suggested a rift between the Nicholsons and other directors.

"The problem is the old family only has a minority of shares, and non-executive directors representing City interests are calling the shots," said one insider.



Locals support the Nicholsons, who began brewing in 1837

# EU delegation embarks on plan to prevent tax havens



Martin Walker in Brussels

**T**HE European Union is to send a high-powered delegation to its tiny neighbours, from Switzerland to Monaco to Andorra and Liechtenstein, to persuade them not to become tax havens and to join Europe's plans for automatic withholding taxes on non-national bank accounts.

For tiny countries like San Marino (pop 22,304) or Andorra (pop 62,000) or the less than one square mile principality of Monaco (pop 30,400), this may feel like a visit from the heavy mob.

Switzerland may be more robust when the tax harmonisers of Europe come to call. But the Channel Islands, which are estimated to keep up to £400 billion out of the British taxman's clutches, may find themselves fighting for their financial lives.

To maintain the international competitiveness of the union's financial markets, equivalent measures ensuring a minimum level of effective taxation should be adopted on as wide a basis as possible, the Commission said.

Decoded, that means they want to ensure no European money leaks out into tax havens from the withholding tax system. The tax has been strongly pushed by Germany, France and Belgium to prevent their wealthier citizens carrying out tax avoidance schemes.

Paul Murray, corporate development director, who becomes the new group finance director, disclosed that Lasmo is talking to other independent producers about co-operating on even greater schemes. That discussion goes as far as creating joint ventures to share assets.

Gordon Brown will go into battle against at least one aspect of the plan, which he fears could damage the City of London's bond markets. The clash will come on December 1, when EU finance ministers meet to consider the taxation report which the Commission passed yesterday.

A year ago, Britain signed an agreement on a code of conduct to prevent "unfair competition" in taxation, and Mr Brown assumed British interests would be safeguarded since Treasury secretary Dawn Primarolo has been chairing the working group.

"Much has changed in the last year, when we only just got that agreement passed," said internal market and taxation Commissioner Mario Monti. "And the changes will come even faster with the euro. Tax coordination is now something everybody wants, to a greater or lesser extent."

"There is no consensus yet on harmonising our corporate taxes, and it would be ludicrous for Brussels to propose personal taxes, that is a matter for the member states," Mr Monti added.

Playing for time: the casino at Monte Carlo

states," Mr Monti added. "But Europe had agreed at last year's summit that we have to shift the strategic direction of our tax systems away from taxes on jobs and labour, and we have also agreed that 'green' taxes on energy and pollution are a promising way forward."

## society

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The Guardian

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Canada 2.47	India 70.576	New Zealand 3.04	Sweden 13.23
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# Finance Guardian

## Taylor who could not cut it

Lisa Buckingham and Jill Treanor on the sudden departure of the Barclays chief

IT WAS drinking night in the City: Thursday, the evening when dealers and traders hit the wine bars to celebrate, without jeopardising their real weekends in the country. But as the armies of the Square Mile headed for fun or family, 10 of the most influential individuals in British banking gathered for an historic confrontation.

Martin Taylor, once regarded as the shooting star of the country's financial services industry, had put his job on the line. It was a crisis

board meeting and everyone knew why.

Taylor had been hinting for months that he had had enough. A striding 46 in a world of aged bankers, he had felt he was pushing water uphill; that he was a radical ranged against stuffy, stick-in-the-mud thinkers; that every strategy he devised ran into a brick wall. He had looked tired and ill for months.

It had come to a head. He now wanted out if the board refused to back his plans to split Barclays into two and

wrap up a spectacular merger with another big UK player. The famously brainy banker (whose seven languages include Mandarin Chinese) had resigned on Monday. The board meeting four days later set the seal on that.

After just five years at the helm of Barclays, once Britain's most profitable banking group but one that had faced financial extinction only a decade ago, Taylor wanted to move on.

Critics say he is heading for the door before the world falls in. He has done it before.

Taylor left Courtlands Textiles, an unlikely job for a former journalist, after gaining laurels but before the company's troubles became public. This time his timing may not be so good.

His departure was accompanied yesterday by a warning that Barclays' profits could drop as low as \$1.9 billion this year, compared with even the most miserly market expectation of \$2.1 billion and only a fraction better than 1997, which had been one of its worst financial performances.

It was not the first time he had disappointed the City. Only three months ago, Taylor was forced to disclose that Barclays Capital, the remnants of its investment and corporate banking business, had lost \$250 million in the Russian meltdown. Weeks later it was *mea culpa* again from Taylor. Barclays had, it appeared, been dealing with Long-Term Capital Management, the controversial hedge fund which had to be bailed out by the US Federal Reserve, but which Taylor's conservative risk policies should have declared a trading parish.

Worst of all, the bank's precious share price hit the skids. Taylor had set his entire stall on Barclays' ability to perform for shareholders who had suffered so badly under earlier regimes. This was a tightrope he managed to walk for the early part of his tenure, helped, of course, by his decision to buy up the bank's shares and therefore support the price. Barclays' figures were flattered by the atrocious performance of some of its rivals, notably NatWest which was going through one of the most traumatic periods in its history.

But when it came to taking action, the City was less supportive of Taylor. "He is brilliant at thinking but bloody awful at doing," said one big investor. The eventual on-off disposal of the wayward investment banking business, BZW, was an example and this is one reason why the City's response to his departure was so mixed.

BZW was staffed with highly-paid stars. While capable of producing spectacular profits, all too often it had failed to produce the goods. Taylor wanted to compete with the biggest and the best, the Merrill Lynchs and Goldman Sachs of the world. But BZW devoured precious capital and ultimately did not deliver. Uncharacteristically,

though, Taylor unmed and abed about getting shot of it. A U-turn under pressure from exasperated shareholders finally forced his hand a year ago.

His handling of the deal was widely regarded as laughable. BZW was a people business where morale was regarded as crucial. By announcing the disposal rather than conducting a secret auction, Taylor effectively allowed big-hitters to defect and was then fessed into paying huge bonuses to persuade people to stay. "Most of the businesses he's sold haven't created shareholder value," said one investor. "But announcing in advance that you are going to sell a people business is the height of ineptitude."

Worst of all, the bank's share price hit the skids. Taylor had set his stall on Barclays' ability to perform for shareholders

maintain market leadership. It was little wonder that Taylor did not find the boardroom going totally smooth. Rumours surfaced this year that shareholders were lobbying non-executive directors over their worries that the control systems at Barclays Capital were less than watertight. Taylor has pinned a great deal on his conviction that risks are well under control, yet one insider claimed last night this confidence might be optimistic.

Yet many in the City instinctively like his latest strategy of dividing what remains of Barclays into two — retail and corporate — then attempting to mastermind a blockbusting merger with one of the big players in the UK or Europe. This proved too much for the "solidators" in the boardroom: some wanted to retain a wider range of business interests

and others were merely losing confidence in Taylor. It was now that the whole conflict with the old-style bankers really surfaced. Yes, Taylor is clearly bright, but has he got enough knowledge, experience and gravitas to pull his bank through a time of such revolution in global financial markets not to mention a near-recession at home?

Meanwhile, Barclays was launching its own attempts to woo young trendies with the sleek-but-nonsensical brand B2. It was some kind of bank account but no one seemed quite sure what. And it has so far failed to capture anyone's imagination other than that of advertising luvvies.

Worries that Taylor's eye was off the ball were underlined when Barclays, the country's biggest credit card company, admitted it needed to slash 1,000 jobs to try to

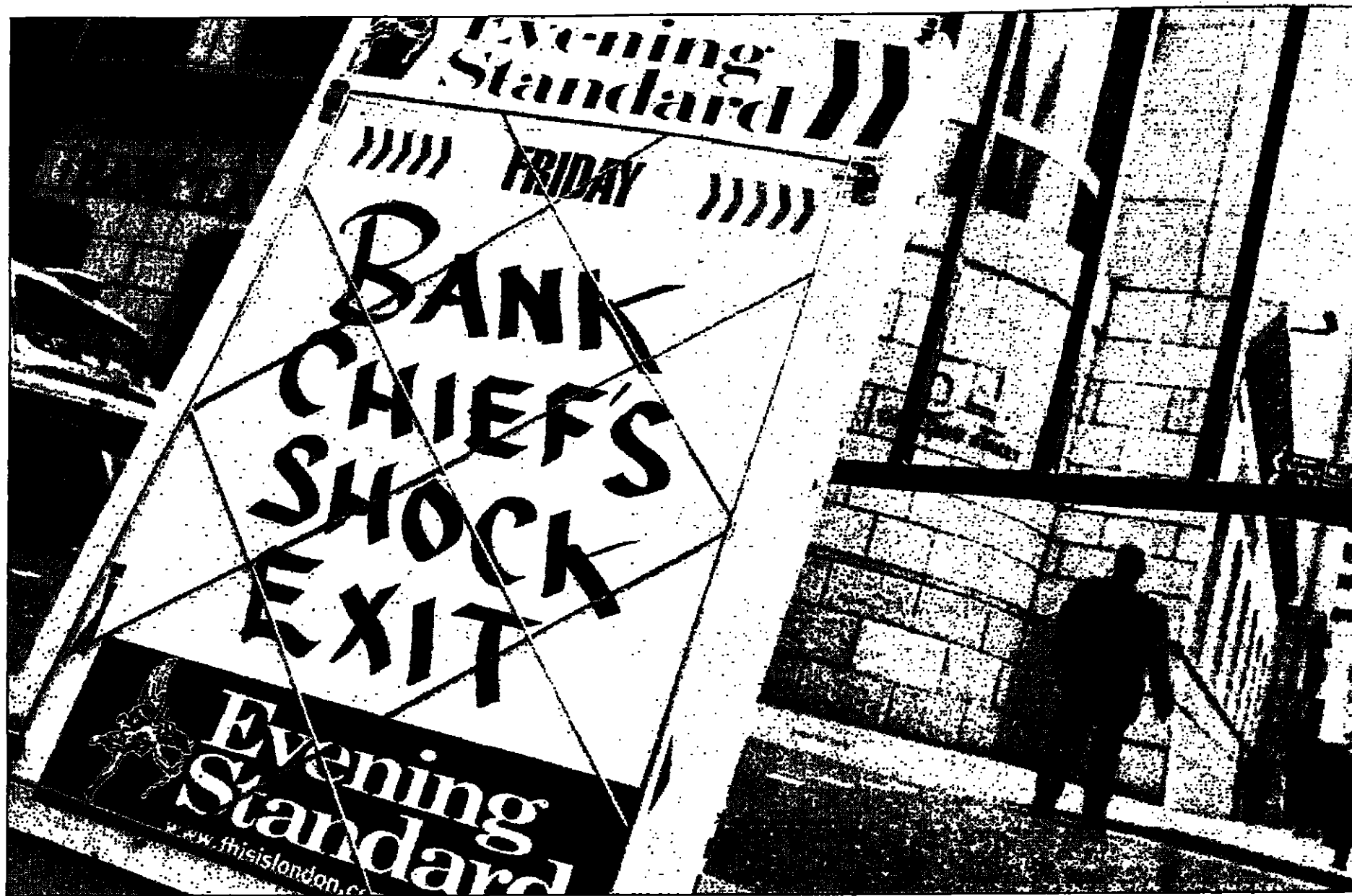
issue at the heart of his employees' grumbles. He said the job would take only a day a month — but there was always the chance that the intellectual challenge of politics would seem much more appealing than running a high street bank.

Although Taylor let it be known earlier this year that he knew he was nearing the end of his term at Barclays, only in June was he given the chance to install his people in senior roles. When it came to the showdown, the support for him and his thinking was not there.

In a week when the succession crisis at Marks & Spencer hit the headlines, Barclays' non-executives have done little to impress the City with the smoothness of their planning. But Sir Nigel Mobbs, a non-executive, said it would be wrong to see Taylor's departure as the result of a boardroom rift. Sir Peter Middleton, who will hold the fort until a new chief executive is found, said: "Martin felt he just had to go. His enthusiasm just wasn't there."

Taylor refused to explain himself beyond a terse statement which said the issue centred on "my ability to get things done". He signed off with the words: "The group is in good health and well placed to seize future opportunities. It is now time for me to stand down to allow the new management team to take the business forward."

The problem for Barclays and its staff is that only they seem to know the identity of this new management team and only they seem to be confident that a rudderless bank, which yesterday sacrificed much of the confidence of its shareholders, can survive when almost every rival is a potential predator.



Inside Barclays HQ in Lombard Street in the City of London the staff were told not to talk to the press, outside the billboard said it all

PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN GOODMAN

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**Across**

- Empress of India, 1876-1901 (5,9)
- Former ruler of 7 down (4)
- Raised path over sand (8)
- See 14 down
- Wreckage (5)
- Good reputation with others (6)
- Agree — to write (10)
- Doubts because of conscience (8)
- Engrave (4)
- Many see Des by (enag) — a Madness song from 1985 (10,3)

**Down**

- Disregarded (8)
- Distinctive character (5)
- Unintelligent (7)
- Vulgar (5)
- Supervise (7)
- Asian republic, capital Tehran (4)
- Mountain peak — highest point (8)
- Tell in detail (7)
- Elderly ex-soldiers seen on parades (7,10)
- Sovereign (5)
- Jam — cupboard (5)
- 4,840 square yards (4)

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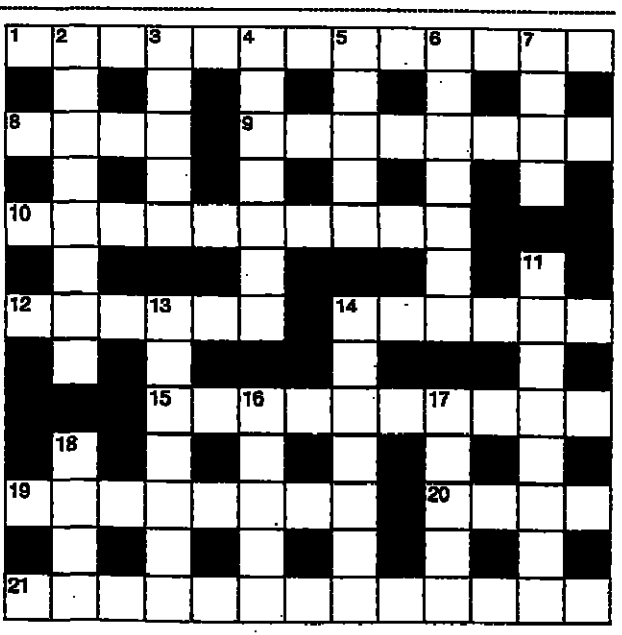
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# saturday

review

Saturday November 28 1998



**Andrew Sullivan** asks why friendship has been so undervalued, and celebrates its revival as a social institution — from *Friends* and *Seinfeld* to coffee shops and e-mails

## A forgotten kind of loving

I don't think I'm alone in thinking that the deepest legacy of the plague years is friendship. The duties demanded in a plague, it turned out, were the duties of friends: the kindness of near strangers, the support that asks the quietest of acknowledgments, the fear that can only be shared with someone stronger than a lover. In this sense, gay men were perhaps oddly well prepared for the trauma, socially primed more than many others to face the communal demands of plague. Denied a recognized family, often estranged from their natural one, they had learned in the few decades of their free existence that friendship was the nourishment that alone enabled them to survive and flourish. And having practised such a virtue in good times, they were as astonished as everyone else to see how well they could deploy it in bad.

It certainly came easily to me. For most of my life, for a variety of reasons, I found it far simpler to make friends than to find lovers. No doubt, this had something to do with my homosexuality (since friendship is the only gay relationship that is socially acknowledged) and something to do with my haphazard romantic history (for want of a lover, a friend often filled the emotional spaces in my life). But friendship is not a relationship anyone has a special claim to. Gay men have sustained and nourished it in our culture only by default. And they are good at friendship not because they are homosexual, but because, in the face of a deep and silent isolation, they are human. Insofar as friendship was an incalculable strength of homosexuals during the calamity of Aids, it merely showed how great a loss is our culture's general underestimation of this central human virtue.

For, of all our relationships, friendship is the most common and the most natural. In its universality, it even trumps family. Many of us fail to marry, and many more have no children; others never know their mother or father, and plenty have no siblings. But any human being who has ever lived for any

time has had a friend. It is a relationship available to and availed by all of us.

It is only, perhaps, when you absorb the notion that someone is truly your equal, truly interchangeable with you, that the death of another makes mortality real. It is as if only in the death of a friend is a true reckoning with mortality ever fully made, before it is too late. In that close encounter with the end of life, certain things become clearer before they become opaque again. And it is at these times that the feelings of grief may actually take the place of a friendship itself, providing a focus for attention, a physical and emotional catharsis that alone displaces the experience we recently had. With Patrick, death swept away the mystery of our friendship and exposed its raw existence. The friendship articulated itself at the moment that it ceased to exist.

We were as alike as we were unlike. Patrick was a big-boned, apple-cheeked, redheaded bruiser of a man, a Southerner with an immense capacity to charm and infuriate. My first sight of him (before I had ever met him) was watching him stride across Dupont Circle, shirtless, with a huge metal bicycle chain draped around his neck, like a python. He had read everything, it seemed. All of Faulkner, twice over at least. Obscure works by Gide, and obscure historical texts on the Civil War. He had taught himself to play the piano and relaxed listening to Marian McPartland and Arvo Part. Obsessed with food, he cooked vast, fatty, floury Southern meals, and knew Rilke in the original German. He laughed mischievously, made up stories, was prone to sudden violent outbursts of temper and hardly ever answered the phone. He was a deeply proud person, and fearless. A rebel who revered authority, a sexual adventurer who treasured love, a traditionalist who rarely gave up a chance to try something new, Patrick struck so many chords within me over the few years I knew him that it seemed truly as if

the world were less lonely with him in it.

And to begin with, of course, I fell in love with him. Most of us did. He didn't allow many people into his intimate life, and the few of us who were privileged to be there were soon forced to tolerate some of the worst varieties of emotional manipulation, but we did so gladly.

I met him in a bookstore, buying a dictionary. He had wandered over, mock sheepish, his shirt hanging out, his baggy khakis sliding down his rump. We struck up some inane conversation and exchanged phone numbers. Over the next few weeks, the courtship blossomed and collapsed. Our first date was an elaborate dinner, cooked in his apartment, accessible only by a fire escape which led into the kitchen itself. We got drunk, stuffed ourselves, and fooled dumsily around until it was time to go.

Of course, he was already romantically involved (with more than one person; it turned out). And there came the inevitable moment when he had to tell me that our connection was about friendship not love, and that the kind of attachment I had begun to feel for him was something about which he could feel only ambivalence, not surety. That love was no less love for being in the mode of friendship. We have come to dread that moment when a date or a lover turns to us and says, "Let's be friends," but this dread is too often

**Homosexuals, by default, manage to sustain friendships unequalled by almost any other part of society**

a misplaced one. Patrick, in the first regard, taught me that. We would have been hopeless lovers: far too headstrong to tolerate each other's constant company. But as friends, by being ourselves in the company of each other, we helped each other ease more deeply into what we thought were our futures. We gave one other confidence, confidence to resist the categories into which society wanted to shoe-horn us, confidence to risk too much in exploring our world, confidence to return to our somewhat estranged families and reconcile ourselves to their love.

To my friends who insist that I was in love with Patrick, I can only insist that our relationship was no less intense for being friendship. And sometimes, in my more meandering moments, I wonder whether such friendship would have been so accessible to us if we had not been homosexual. I'm not saying, of course, that friendship is life often places, in a way unique to itself, a focus on friendship that many heterosexuals, to their great loss, never quite attain. In fact, I think the primary distinction between homosexual and heterosexuals in our society is not that they are attracted to different genders, and certainly not that their sexual lives and needs are radically different from each other. It is that homosexuals, by default as much as anything else, have managed to sustain a society of friendship that is, for the most part, unequalled by almost any other part of society. Heterosexual women have long sustained it, of course, when their familial responsibilities, but heterosexual men, to their great spiritual and emotional impoverishment, have for far too long let it pass them by.

It is astonishing, perhaps, that this is not observed more often. One typical writer has characterized gay culture as a "culture of desire". But this is condescending exaggeration. Desire suffuses gay and straight life, and it no more drives gay men than it does

### CHILDREN'S ILLUSTRATED ENCYCLOPEDIA

"reigns supreme" TES

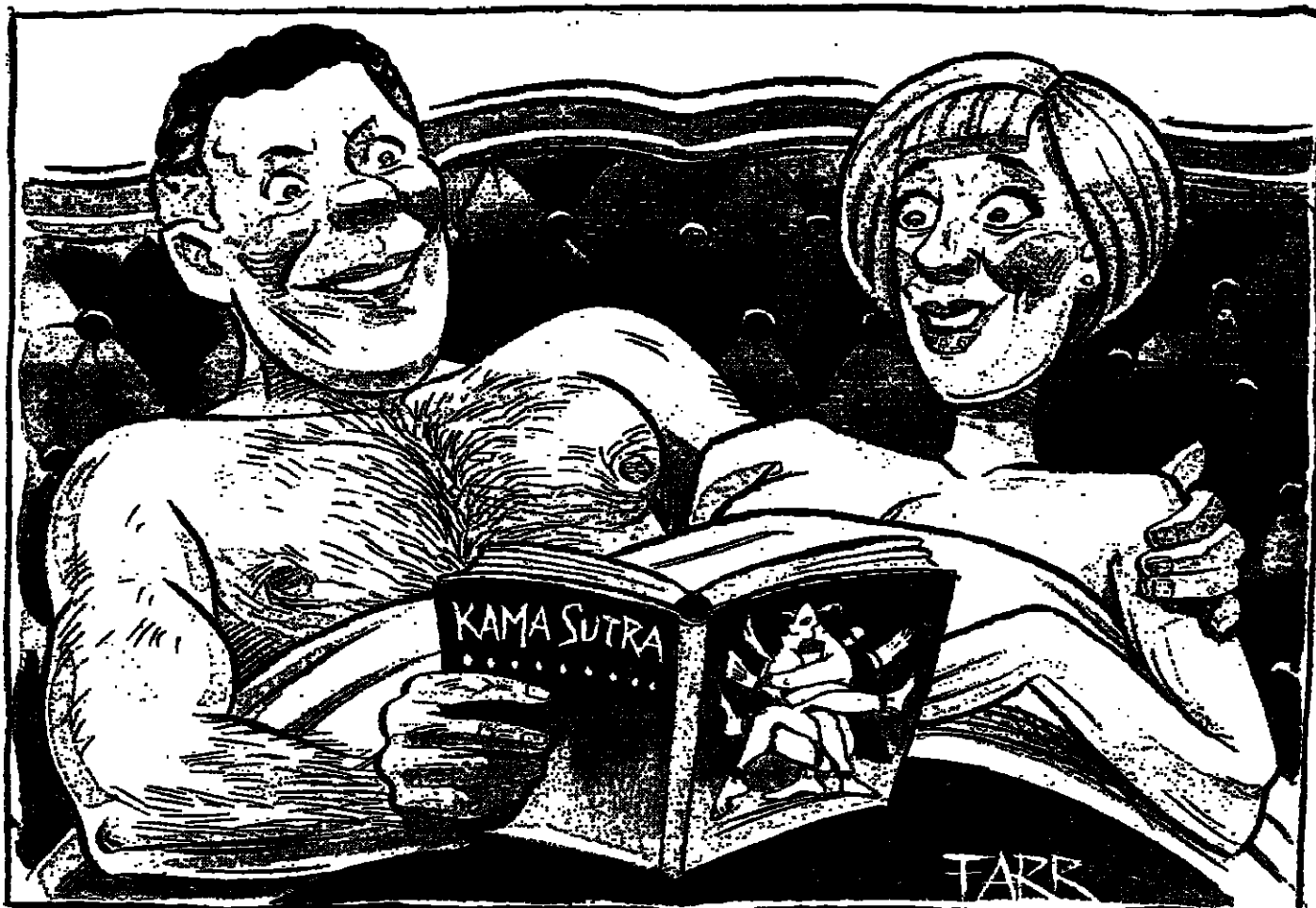
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## Can erotic writing still turn us on?

### Yes No

**Rowan Pelling**  
Editor,  
Erotic Review



**John Sutherland**  
Professor  
of English



**Dear Rowan,**  
The Literary Review's annual Bad Sex Award (for the year's worst description of a bonking scene in fiction, awarded last Thursday) is fun. But it obscures a sad cultural fact. The printed word doesn't do it any more. It can't be pornographic (if you want to be moralistic), obscene (if you want to get legal), or horny (if you want to be macho).

What killed erotic writing? Making it legal. The series of trials from Lady Chatterley in 1960 to Inside Linda Lovelace in 1976 established that in this country (Iran is something else) unillustrated printed material could not, *sui generis*, infringe the Obscene Publications Act. Words could be seditious (as David Shayler knows), blasphemous (as Salman Rushdie knows), racially provocative (as any rap artist knows), but not — after 1976 — sexually offensive. Nothing kills eroticism faster than tolerance.

It was not ever thus. In 1928, Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* was prosecuted by a London magistrate and banned (for over 30 years). All because of the sentence "that night they were not divided". "They" were two lesbians. The Daily Express said it would rather give a child a phial of prussic acid than let her read that sentence. Now *The Well of Loneliness* could be set for A-levels and Lady Chatterley's Lover read as the BBC's Book At Bedtime.

The acid's gone. Obscenity is the ultimate moving target, and it's moved past the written word, into the visual and soon the virtual media. Erotic writing is as much a contradiction in terms as "military intelligence" and "jumbo shrimp".

John Sutherland,  
Lord Northcliffe Professor of  
Modern English Literature,  
University College London

**Dear John,**  
I agree that it is hard work, at present, to titillate our jaded palates with explicit descriptions of sex — but since when, exactly, has the erotic been married to the explicit? The relationship is more fickle — and complex — than that.

The moral restrictions of post-war society gave the words "cunt" and "fuck" a genuine erotic charge when Lady Chatterley's Lover was published because most readers had not seen them in print. Yes, they're now in the dictionary and even in the playground; and yes, it has neutered much of their erotic force. But don't let's panic and put wreaths on Ero's grave. We have been here before, after all.

The bawdy candour of Restoration playwrights followed years of restriction imposed by Cromwell's Protectorate. Defoe and Fielding followed their lead, and then the 19th century arrived and things got prudish again. By its end, people found piano legs sexy, such was their desperation.

Eroticism is not a passive force; it changes its locale to complement the prevailing moral climate. In 1998, where most things are out of the closet, the erotic is beginning its slow retreat back to the ankle. In a world where a chat-up line could well be "Rancie a fuck" and an appeal to the emotions is rewarded with suspicion, the far shores of romantic love may become fertile soil for the would-be eroticist.

The point is that good erotic writing is just about the hardest kind to produce and that is not because of 20th-century ennui, but because it's bloody difficult to turn people on. However, it is a complete failure of the imagination if we decide that literature cannot stimulate that most basic of human inclinations, desire. Why write at all?

Rowan Pelling  
Editor, The Erotic Review

**Dear Rowan,**  
Thanks for the history lesson. I'll reply with one on etymology. "Erotic" deriving from "eros" has traditionally denoted discourse connected with things amatory — sexual love. It's sometimes said that women go for erotic writing, men for pornography, a word which, as Andrea Dworkin instructs us (with feminist relish), derives from the Greek for whore, or slut. The test of erotic writing, as

Anthony Burgess observed, is that it should be "kinetic". It should, to be blunt, get men stiff and women wet. The test of pornography is that it should reduce women to the status of sluts. The incredibly booming commerce in porn (particularly on the Net) does that all too successfully. Oddly, I think there has been a recent revival of erotic discourse, but in wholly unexpected places (and not on the printed page). Non-commercial phone sex, of the kind practised by Bill and Monica, and reproduced by Nicholson Baker in *Vox*, I think, something new.

And, incredibly, e-mail has revived the lost art of the love-letter. E-mail is intimate and immediate. It lends itself to private codes and little languages. Who knows what arts of courtship may be rediscovered? But as for literature, forget it. Can you name three good works of erotic literature in the last five years?

John

**Dear John,**  
I cannot agree with Burgess on this one — he's just plain wrong. Shakespeare and Donne wrote the most erotic poetry on earth and it may well be the heart but it's unlikely to cream the knickers of anyone I know. Erotica covers the whole gamut from tingle to earth tremor. It's pornography that should guarantee results. And Monica and Clinton are a bit of a red herring. Charles and Camilla were the ground-breaking ones. If you can turn your mistress on with talk of sanitary protection, well, you're in another league. As for e-mail, the boom in tender on-line exchanges seems to bolster my theory that romantic love will be the new focus of eroticism.

Regarding your challenge — if we're talking about books that contain passages of good sex writing, then: 1. *Bad To The Bone* (James Waddington) — good on sex with crocodiles. 2. *In The Kingdom Of The Air* (Tim Binding) — good on torrid-affair sex. 3. *Birdsong* (Sebastian Faulks) — good on first world war sex. 4. *Me And The Fat Man* (Julie Myerson) — good on sex with fat people. 5. *Essays In Love* (Alain de Botton) — good on loving young author sex. 6. *Prayer Cushions Of The Flesh* (Robert Irwin) — good on sex with crocodiles, panthers and dwarfs. 7. *The Psalm Killer* (Chris Pettit) — good on sex before your brains are blown out.

Rowan

**Dear Rowan,**  
Touche on Charles and Camilla. You're right, of course. What was

embarrassing about that tape was listening to a couple getting worked up, and also descending into soporifics. The trick, I suppose, is to be erotic and lucid and intelligent at the same time. On the seven titles, I think you are tactically changing ground. "Passages of good sex writing" are not the same thing, surely, as erotic writing? That's to say, you can write very well about sex but leave the reader cold. Or worse. *Ulysses* was cleared for publication in the US in the 1930s on the grounds that its sexual descriptions were "emetic" rather than "erotic". The logic being that the more disgusting the sexual descriptions, the more palatable.

As it happens, as a teenager I found the *Penelope* section of Joyce's book extraordinarily arousing. I would like to think that is an enthusiastic, but essentially "adolescent" response that one outgrows. It would surely be grotesque to read a book about the tragedy of the first world war, like *Birdsong*, to get an erection. But, as you imply (and almost convince me) it's a tricky business. Obviously, when one reads a book, one doesn't put one's genitals in the deep freeze. I suppose what I would ask you is whether a eunuch could read your seven titles and get something out of them, or whether it would be like a blind person looking at a sunset?

John

**Dear John,**  
I haven't changed the goalposts. I do think all these books contain passages that are genuinely erotic, albeit on a sliding scale. One of the reasons they work, with the exception of Irwin's book, which sets out to be erotic, is that, as in life, the sex is an interlude between other concerns. I agree that it's an interlude you can do without when reading about the trenches. However, for its many fans the sex is part of the draw — big death, little death, I suppose. But that's really the problem with erotica (and humour): lack of consensus. In so far as there is agreement amongst the reading public, I think it would work something like this: boys like *Ulysses* and *DIH*; Lawrence; girls like Jane Eyre and *Birdsong*; academics like *Ars Amoris* and pretty much anything that's 2,000 years old.

Your eunuch would like *Prayer Cushions Of The Flesh* — it is set in a harem. But if he wants to understand how sex can transcend the merely physical, send him the one short sex scene in *Bad To The Bone*.

Rowan

### Smallweed



I were William Hague, which thank the Lord I'm not, sir, I'd be first in the queue for this new alleged cure for baldness. In Smallweed's view, Hague has the worst job since Sisyphus and (as the judges in the Spectator/Highland Park Whisky Parliamentarian of the Year Awards rightly concluded) the fact that he's doing so badly isn't his fault.

Whatever an Opposition leader did now would be wrong. The electorate thinks Tony Blair has abolished party politics. They are sick and tired of political parties and political bickering, and they think in electing Blair they have found themselves a national leader who soars above such petty preoccupations. So when Hague and his henchpeople do the job they have to do and attack him, people turn away in disgust.

You can see this phenomenon, too, in recent opinion polls which show that if Blair behaves like a control freak, the customers rather like it. They think he's quite right to fill the European Parliament and other such institutions with people who'll do as they're told. They no longer have much tolerance for those who dare to challenge the will of a national leader.

Which brings me to Hague's bald pate. The public tends to look at a bald politician. Neil Kinnock suffered from being bald as well as from being Welsh. (In America, President Eisenhower, or as the Guardian one day inadvertently called him, President Eisenhower, was both bald and hugely popular, but

he'd won a war.) In Hague's case, being bald has the added distraction of making him look like the Mekon. How different, how very much friendlier, how much more TV-compatible, he would look with a thatch, like Thatcher! The shadow cabinet should club together to buy him the treatment. They should also make a point of getting Portillo to contribute.

None of the above, I need hardly say, should be read as in any way condoning baldism, an offence any panny state worth its salt would by now have had policed by a Baldness Relations Board. In these irreligious times, too, people forget the fate that can visit those who scoff at the bald. Let me draw their attention to the second book of Kings, chapter 2, verses 23 and 24, which refer to the prophet Elisha: *And he went up from thence unto Bethel; and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children, out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head. And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them.*

Things are not looking good for my favourite Scottish football club, Cowdenbeath. After (and no doubt because of) Smallweed's state visit to Central Park in August, the team started winning matches. Supporters sent me a triumphant headline from the local press which read: *Now it's nine on the trot. Though disappointingly, this proved to mean nine points, not nine victories.*

But fortune has turned against them. On Wednesday, entertaining their local rivals Montrose, the bottom club in the Scottish third division, they must have hoped for three points, but within two minutes they'd conceded a goal to a player with the unusual name (except in the county of Fife, perhaps) Trialist. A 2-0 defeat on the night has reduced them to penultimate place in the table. I call upon the battling

Scottish backbencher Dennis Canavan, whom I've just discovered was born in the town, to take urgent action to stop the Central Park rot.

In a characteristic onslaught in Thursday's Guardian on those who want to save grammar schools, Lord Hattersley of Hillsborough, as I like to think of him, quoted some of these people's effusions and asked: "Would you want your children to be educated by people who write tired clichés?" The answer has to be yes. If you cleared out of the profession all those teachers who write tired clichés, you'd have very few teachers left.

The same principle, by the way, has to apply, when you face the facts at the end of the day, as one surely must, willy-nilly, to journalism as well.

How benighted we have all been, those of us who cling to the view that anti-establishmentarianism was the longest real word in the language. Compared to some of the other contenders offered to Smallweed this week, *antidis* is no more than a pygmy. *Pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis*, which two readers recommend, has 45 letters, while *hyperpolydipsomorphocuculoneuroptilligranulocytopenia* (a higher than normal number of the most common type of white cells in the blood) — a word employed in teaching by David Peers, senior lecturer in Human Physiology at the London College of Fashion — has 48. A reader in Brockenhurst, Hants, says the labels on bottles of TCP used to list an ingredient called *trichlorophenylmethylodiosalicyl* (32). I turned at once to the bottle of TCP I always keep close to hand, but it's now merely described as "an aqueous glycerol solution of halogenated phenols". I can think of no clearer or more disgraceful example of the omnipresent dumbing-down which, here and now in this day and age, is eating away at the very fabric of our once-proud society.

## The Readers' Editor on... foreign coverage Abroad-minded view

### Ian Mayes Open door



The entire cost of the [Manchester] Guardian's foreign service for the whole of its first year as a daily, in the mid-1850s, was probably no more than £2,500. The paper had very few regular foreign correspondents and still relied to a significant extent on news called from the foreign press, or from the London newspapers.

What the paper had already discovered, however, was in the process of serving, was a voracious appetite among its readers for news of events beyond their immediate horizon, an appetite stimulated to some extent in those early years by business ambitions and anxieties.

Today the paper spends a sum well into seven figures on its foreign coverage. As the world has shrunk the Guardian's foreign operations have continued to expand on the principle that there is rarely anything better than a well-informed account of events in context from the paper's own correspondent on the ground. How well-informed a report may be is sometimes a matter for passionate argument.

The foreign desk in Farringdon Road can now call upon more than 60 correspondents. Eleven of these are on the staff of the Guardian, two in Brussels, two in Washington, and one in each of the following places: New York, Moscow, Hong Kong, Jerusalem, Rome, Bonn and Johannesburg. There is a second, contract, correspondent in South

Africa, one of eight around the world who are paid the equivalent of salaries. The others are in New York, New Delhi, Beirut, Tokyo and Paris (where we have two contract correspondents).

Nine other correspondents are on retainers which allow them to work for other outlets. Beyond these there is a global scattering of stringers, journalists who file occasionally — from the Philippines or Fiji, for example.

In addition to all these, the foreign editor can deploy, or simply seek the advice of, several specialist foreign reporters — one or two former foreign editors, and several former correspondents in key areas who now have different jobs in Farringdon Road. The foreign editor has a vast range of expertise at his disposal. He has a deputy, two assistant foreign editors and three secretaries. There are 12 sub-editors, some with specialist knowledge of different parts of the world, who process the reports, write the headlines and lay out the pages.

The foreign editor's day starts at 7am with the headlines in the Today programme on Radio 4. He then switches to the World Service for the international news until 710 before returning to the Today programme and sticking with that until he has heard the 8 o'clock news. He reads the main news and foreign pages of the broadsheets on the bus, aiming to get into the office by about 9am. Then he'll look at the International Herald Tribune and the Financial Times, before reading the wires, Reuter and Associated Press.

After that he and his colleagues begin telephoning correspondents, starting from the east, say, Sydney or Tokyo, because of the time differences, and working back towards Europe. By 10.30am he will have an outline list for the editor's first conference of the day, including two or three stories to pitch for the front pages 1, 2 and 3, where leading home and foreign reports are mixed.

The next meeting, exclusively to consider the shape of these first three headline pages, is at 12.30. Lunchtime may be spent talking to colleagues or, depending on events, continuing to read in. Around this time the first calls are made to the US. By 4pm when the last formal editorial meeting takes place — again to discuss the contents of the front three pages — the whole paper will be taking shape and the foreign department will be at work on the three, four or five pages devoted exclusively to foreign news that day.

The key to the conduct of a successful foreign operation, it seems to be generally agreed, is the relationship, the degree of mutual trust, between the desk and the correspondents in the field. They need to be in regular contact with each other. I am told that most foreign correspondents, although they may call it by different names, have experienced "warheaditis", when they begin to feel like aliens in their own newspaper. They want contact, not to be ignored, to be briefed and feel that their own essential independence has been reinforced. Occasionally a life may depend on the understanding between desk and correspondent. Correspondents want to feel that their judgment is respected and that they are not entirely driven from the desk in London. Only the desk, on the other hand, knows what is competing for prominence in the rest of the paper. Differences have to be resolved diplomatically and quickly, because by middle to late evening, once again we have run out of time.

For the development of the Guardian's foreign news service read David Aynsley's *Guardian, Biography Of A Newspaper*, 1971. You will need to get it from a library. Readers may contact the office of the Readers' Editor by telephoning 0171 239 9599 between 11am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Surface mail to Readers' Editor, The Guardian, 119, Farringdon Road, London EC1A 3EP. Fax 0171 239 9887. E-mail: reader@guardian.co.uk

## A forgotten kind of loving

page 13 straight men. What gay culture really is, before it is anything else, before it is a culture of desire or a culture of subversion or a culture of pain, is a culture of friendship.

And I think this begins early in a homosexual life. Friendship, in homosexual development, plays a pivotal part not just in socialization, but in the emergence of identity itself. Because, in a way, it is only when the gay child finds this first true friend that he can really exist at all. Until then, only a part of him exists, while the essential person, in his deepest self, remains hidden in many cases, from himself and almost always from the people he cares about most, his family.

This cultural polarization between family-based heterosexuals and friend-based homosexuals is, of course, unfortunate. Perhaps

the most important cultural aim of the modern homosexual movement, then, should be to bring the homosexual child back into the fold of his or her family, or, rather, to allow the family to be the emotional bedrock of every child's life, gay and straight. And if one were to devise a parallel social aim for a putative heterosexual movement, it would surely be the opposite. It would be to open the heterosexual life — especially the male heterosexual life — to the possibilities of intimacy and support that friendship offers, to vent the family with the fresh air of friendship, to expand the range of relationships and connections that every heterosexual person can achieve.

Oddly enough, I think you see this happening already. You see the gay movement abandoning its radical roots to reconcile gay men and women with their families and communities as a whole. And you see networks of heterosexual women finding new strength and self-confidence in a world where marriages are later, divorce is more



common, and long periods of life are lived outside of the marital bond. You see it in the Men's Movement and the Million Man March. All these are fledgling attempts to forge some kind of social belonging among men that provides greater support than the etiolated and awkward gestures of the 1950s. You see it in the extraordinary depiction of friendship in popular culture, from the most popular sit-coms of

the day, *Friends* and *Seinfeld*, to the most popular dramas, such as *E.R.*, which subliminally celebrates the professional bonds of strangers. You see it in hugely popular books such as *Girlfriends* and unexpectedly successful movies such as *Waiting To Exhale* or *My Best Friend's Wedding*. In all this, the need for nonfamilial and nonsexual intimacy is surely uppermost in our minds, however hard it is for us to

articulate it. The end of this century, we are told, has been about the reconstitution of the family. But the corollary of this, surely, is that it is also about the revival of friendship as a social institution. From the flourishing chat rooms on the Internet to friendship-friendly e-mail and to the coffee bars and health clubs that increasingly dominate our bourgeois modes of interaction, networks of friends are

increasingly complementing the networks of family. Families and marriages fail too often because they are trying to answer too many human needs. A spouse is required to be a lover, a friend, a mother, a father, a soulmate, a co-worker, and so on. Few people can be all these things for one person. And when demands are set too high, disappointment can only follow. If husbands and wives have deeper and stronger friendships outside the marital unit, the marriage has more space to breathe and fewer burdens to bear. Likewise, a lack of true family can, I think, impinge on friendship. If we have many friends and no real family, we tend to demand of friends things which are equally inappropriate. The two relationships, then, family and friendship, are surely rivals, but they are also complements to one another. There is no reason why most human lives should not have a deep experience of both.

And this applies perhaps especially to heterosexual men. The fear of male intimacy, which is intrinsic-

cally connected to a fear of homosexuality, has too often denied straight men the bonds they need to sustain themselves through life's difficulties. When they socialize, they too often demand the chapter one of sports or work to avoid the appearance of being gay. How often, for example, do two adult straight men go out to dinner together? Or merely spend time doing nothing together? Perhaps the most overlooked benefit of a culture which can relax its strictures against homosexual love and life is that we could finally liberate heterosexual life to experience a more fluid and satisfying and intimate range of nonsexual relations without the fear of stigma or moral panic. This is why the movement for homosexual liberation is actually a misnomer. It is a movement for human liberation, and heterosexuals stand to gain from it as much as anyone.

Extracted from *Love Undetectable* by Andrew Sullivan. Published by Chatto & Windus (£12.95), and reviewed on page 8 of this section.



This water meadow, portrayed in 1906, is now the flatlands shown below. Will it soon vanish under the latest cash crop? **Anne Perkins** on the new blight that threatens the countryside



Lugg Meadow by Brian Hutton  
HEREFORD MUSEUM  
PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF MORGAN

# In search of pastures few

**T**hink potatoes. Humble, perfect potatoes, round and unblemished on the outside, creamy white and unblemished on the inside. Boil them, mash them, grate, shred or chip them, they're the enduring symbol of nature's bounty to mankind. And what's truly astonishing, they don't have a Euro-subsidy to their name.

Now think environmental villains. Yup, it's those potatoes again. Our ancient green pastures, the few grassy acres left after two generations of depredation, are now threatened by the dear old tattie. The blight is falling hardest on one county in particular. "We're seeing the browning of Herefordshire," mourned a farmer who's also a city councillor last week. "It's one of the last pastoral counties in England and it's being ploughed up. We grow more potatoes than Lincolnshire now." Twice as many as 10 years ago, the National Farmers Union admits.

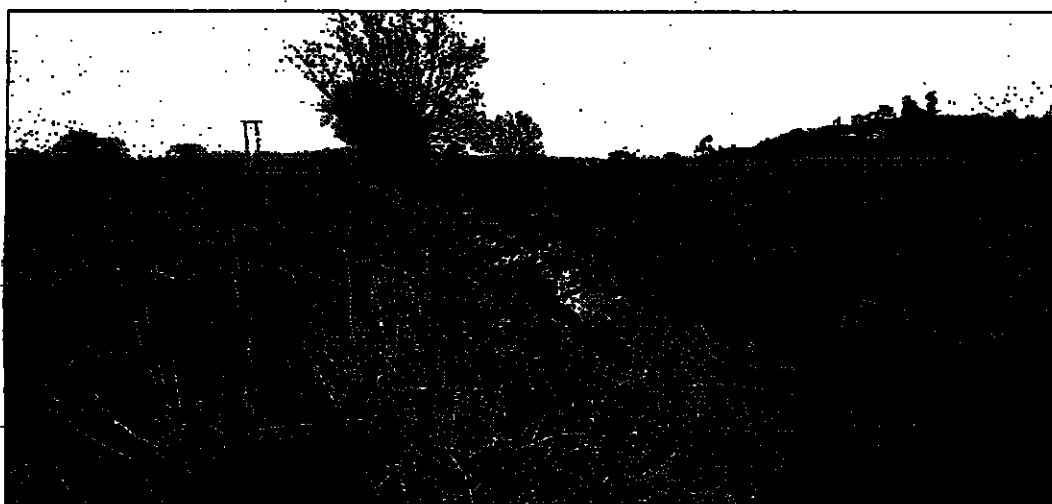
Herefordshire's always been a green county, a rural idyll of a place, small family farms along the broad and meandering river Wye, cider orchards and sheep and cattle, a place where it rains a lot but in a soft and refreshing way. It's not quite Wales, but it's still a long way from London and Birmingham. It's a kind of low-budget alternative to Gloucestershire, fancied by media and arty types (Roy Strong, John Birt, even the Guardian's Matthew Engel) who buy up the plain Georgian red brick rectories and knock together grey stone farmworkers' cottages so handy for the annual bookfest at Hay-on-Wye. It's a place to live out one of

the last great British hypocrisies, that the countryside is a place of unique virtue where our forebears lived uncomplicated lives.

Now, it's experiencing a simple, everyday tale of slow environmental degradation fuelled by high prices for potatoes and low prices for everything else, a tale repeated dozens of times in slightly different ways across Britain. "Potatoes thrive best in 'clean' soil where they haven't been grown before and where there's no build-up of disease, in good stone-free land," says David Lovelace from the local branch of the Council for the Protection of Rural England. Traditionally, Lincolnshire's rich, flat fenland reclaimed from the sea nurtured the potato barons. But Herefordshire has something similar: hundreds of acres of flood plain along the banks of the Wye and its tributaries, once only good for haymaking and grazing during the drier summer months and rarely, if ever, ploughed before.

"No one's the villain, it's economics," says the man from the Farmers' Wildlife and Agriculture Group, or FWAG, an organisation that works with farmers to protect the environment. (The issue is so hot locally, he didn't want to be named.) It's one of the major environmental concerns in the county. Farmers are very sorry to dig up grassland, but they're not making any money out of beef or sheep and then the potato growers offer to rent grassland at £300 to £400 an acre. You can't get £100 an acre for grazing. It can make the difference between survival and bankruptcy.

Herefordshire's river systems are, in theory, protected against the ravages of economics. The Wye



and a 10-metre strip either side are Sites of Special Scientific Interest, important enough to be under consideration for European status as a Special Area of Conservation. So far, just one farmer is facing possible prosecution by English Nature, after renting out his 50-acre flood meadow at Sellack to a potato grower. Stage one, before any ploughing, is a generous application of herbicide. In this case, it landed on the SSSI-protected river bank, too, and now the whole lot has been cultivated, further damaging the site.

The meadow is also in the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which should mean even higher levels of protection. "But," laments Robert Price, one of the committee which advises the AONB board, "it has no statutory powers over change of use. We can't do anything about it."

Ploughing up grassland also

releases dangerously high levels of nitrates and phosphates, stored naturally in old pasture, into the river. Sediment is washed from the land and gathers on the Wye's luxuriant curves, spoiling the gravel breeding grounds for freshwater fish and clogging up the once-legendary salmon river.

**H**erefordshire's peculiar potato blight may only be a new twist on an old tale, but it goes straight to the heart of the Great Countryside Dilemma, which the Government is promising to address in the Rural White Paper announced yesterday by the Deputy Prime Minister. Whose countryside is it? Or, what are farmers for: guardians of the environment or suppliers of nosh to the nation? And, even if they are more food growers than

custodians of theme-park Britain, could there be — hey, here's a good name for it — a Third Way?

In theory the last reform of the Common Agricultural Policy did herald just such a third way, introducing incentives for eco-friendly farming. But the statistics suggest they don't do much good. A recent survey, by the soon-to-be-defunct Countryside Commission which was charged with preserving the rural environment, found that farmers were applying fertiliser and ploughing up grassland to reseed it and increase profitability.

Nor is the long battle for the hedgerow over. Critics claim that the criteria in the new legislation protecting it is so tough, it covers only about one in five hedges. "You can have a hedge that is really important to the landscape and as a wildlife habitat, but which isn't old enough or doesn't have enough species in it to qualify,"

according to Alastair Rutherford, the CPRE's policy director.

At the same time economic pressure to increase the size of fields in the name of efficiency mounts. Twice as many hectares of long-term grassland were ploughed up nationally in 1997 as in 1996. Wheezes dreamt up by the Ministry of Agriculture to subsidise particular kinds of farming in Environmentally Sensitive Areas are too underfunded to make a difference. According to Mike Wilkinson of English Nature, applications for subsidies to farm less intensively have soared as the price of beef and lamb has plummeted. "We put in more applications than ever before last year," he says, "and we got more rejected."

Campaigners may jeer, but farmers insist they want to be environmentally friendly, as long as they can afford it. The National Farmers' Union, now energetically rebranding itself as nature's friend, has recently argued that market pressures are destroying the quintessentially British nature of the lowland landscape. "The lowlands are the very heart of our country. Their meadows, woodlands, glades, streams and pastures are home not only to a broad spectrum of biodiversity but also to some of the rarest species of wildlife," the president, Ben Gill, wrote lyrically. The NFU's 12-point plan for survival reads more like a ransom demand. The only answer, it says, is more subsidy. David Lovelace, from Hereford CPRE, says: "They're saying give us the money, and we'll give you the landscape."

But other environmentalists reckon the NFU has a point. "I don't think you'll ever turn

Herefordshire green again," says Roger Phillips, the man on the local council responsible for sustainable development. "Farmers aren't going to maintain pasture because there isn't the demand for livestock. If you don't support livestock, you won't have the countryside."

There are distant rumblings of a movement that says the peculiar English love affair with a long-departed rural utopia must end. Nigel Curry, a Cheltenham-based academic who specialises in rural planning, wants farming to be run like any other industry, on a "polluter pays" basis.

**T**hat may please the Herefordshire newcomers: they would be less amused by the flipside of the coin.

Curry writes farming off as an engine for rural recovery. "We must open up the countryside for development. It cannot survive on a single-sector economy."

Workshops or tea-shops? Long before that debate's resolved, farmers will be ranching their cattle on the Herefordshire hills while the rest of the county looks more and more like the rest of Britain: ploughed up.

So, just as you've learnt not to buy peat for the garden to protect the bogs, and to buy only free-range eggs to protect the hen, add potatoes to the list of items for the eco-friendly shopper. But, since supermarkets don't like telling you where the food comes from, you'll have to choose the lumpy ones, those with blemishes and imperfections, if you're to be confident that tonight's mash doesn't come from virgin flood meadow.

## That was our year that was

Writer and critic **Richard Hoggart** introduces the collected best of the Guardian

**A**n admission at the start. Fifty years a Guardian reader, almost under the shadow of CP Scott, I expect to remain a reader till I die — in spite of some wobbles over recent years. Of those, more later.

This anthology does much to reinforce confidence. At its best, the Guardian is a very good newspaper indeed. It honours good writing and the search for unbiased intelligence and imagination, and the leaders reinforce its columnist's efforts. It tackles directly issues that should haunt us all but which most of our "gatekeepers" in the press prefer to ignore or distort for

their own purposes. Such as how to manage best the awful sore of Third World debt, or the problems of the National Health Service below the obvious level — waiting lists — that preoccupies less well-nourished commentators. I do not remember the main question — how to deal with the fact that the service now has two tiers, public and private — being raised by the department's spokesmen.

Similarly one does not hear much from the Department for Education about the way to tackle the great dilemmas of comprehensive education, by which those of us in principle in favour of "the comprehensive idea" are troubled, precisely because it involves contradictory good principles. All this is a continent away from the shallow, selective treatment of the tabloids.

When they are brought together, some of the Guardian's less evident strengths emerge from the half-shadow. The obituaries, for example. Except in one instance here, they avoid sentimental fawning and point in the warts without any

smart-alec clay-foot finding. The Guardian's courage in chasing corruption in high places, especially political, was best shown last year and deserves another salute.

Being of a literary bent, I especially enjoyed the report on Joyce's *Ulysses*. It is, of course, hilarious. From that, the oddest thought of all is that we were so recently and so blindly daft about our censorship. Some of the former Lord Chamberlain's higher lunacies were revealed this year from the Public Records Office. Those of Sir Archibald Bodkin apropos Joyce must now stand beside them in any student's introduction to the subject. No one could send up our national moral regulators better than they do themselves.

Now the niggles, the worries. There are three, two stronger than the third, which is the tendency in comic writing to be twee. That's a sign of uncertainty and widespread today, but there are only a couple of instances in this collection.

More important is not only the obsession with "youth" but its peculiar forms. "Youth" in the eyes

of most writers seems to be between the ages of 13 and 16; totally absorbed in the latest pop-culture fads. As an undergraduate, I would have laughed at peers who behaved like that and hardly thought of them as potential Guardian readers. Perhaps it would be better to pay more attention to the old whose numbers are increasing rapidly? At least there are hints here that "Youth isn't so cool" after all.

"To ask the hard question is simple." That early Auden line often comes to mind. Its answer has to be: "To accept the hard answer isn't at all simple." This is recalled when we meet yet again the sentimental,

anti-judgmental relativism characteristic of the times. That is the tendency to avoid judgments of character in favour of blaming all failings on society; corner-cutting to avoid the suggestion of personal responsibility; the neglect of hard choices in favour of showing that one's heart is in the right place. Most writers on issues with exceptionally difficult moral implications manage to ignore them.

One essay here highlights the difficulties. An otherwise admirable piece on the terrible plight of Iraqi hospitals as a result of the sanctions virtually ignores the difficult but not justifiably evadable case for



The bigger picture... There are the most mischievous cartoonists. I am sure Mr Blair's entourage do not like these!

sanctions. True to its principles, the Guardian asks the Foreign Secretary to respond, which he does with equal conviction. But two people uttering their convictions side by side is not the same as two people actually engaged with one another; or as one journalist recognising in the one piece the inescapable pros and cons of a dreadful set of choices.

Back to the continuing strengths. This collection exhibits very well, because in some depth, the Guardian's attention to contemporary social and personal concerns, such as the collapse of many Asian economies. It tells us things we don't want to know or contemplate. It reveals, with controlled passion, the self-righteousness of the Swiss apropos their finagling over Hitler's gold. It powerfully and sympathetically lays out the dilemma for women in balancing work and family. It deploys well an imaginative mosaic of responses to the Northern Ireland agreement.

Most valuable is the reporting of the new Labour Government. The paper promised to be and has been critical, and for that the Government should be grateful, for this is not the endless, one-sided carping of the Tory press. But, yes, it recalls the old crack about the relations between press and Government — like that between dogs and trees. As a basic principle in a democracy, that is fair enough. So a newspaper does right to pursue the matter of large donations to Labour and their possible relationship to

advertisements for smoking. The Government is lucky to have such frank and honest friends.

As I write this, the Guardian has interviewed one of the Prime Minister's close advisers. He talked of the importance of "making a lot of profits", which is "not an ethical question". In the background, aeons away it seems, I heard the gruff, gentle voice of the social and economic historian RH Tawney talking of brotherhood, charity and usury, and happily looked again at David Marquand's long analytic piece on *The First Year*. Illustrating all this there are, as always, the most able and sometimes mischievous cartoonists. I am sure Mr Blair's entourage do not like these.

A newspaper such as this has to have a hinterland, a background, moral texture, rather than merely a daily succession of rhetorical "ooh-ahs". It gives space and within it can be tacitly unsparing. It says, implicitly, that there is more to life than beer, football, sex and box-office blockbusters; or than fat cats, glossy modishness, designer clothes, designer food; than "New Values" for the New British People.

Ranging over this great variety of themes and noting again the responsible consistency of approach, one realises that if these writers have a central core, it is the assertion of humane social and personal values, which are now, in too many parts of Britain, in total decline.

This is extracted from Richard Hoggart's introduction to *The Guardian Year '98*, edited by John Ezard, Fourth Estate, £12.98.

# books



When we were friends... Paul Theroux and V.S. Naipaul share a platform at Hay-on-Wye literary festival

PHOTOGRAPH: JEREMY YOUNG

## Friendship. Not a bed of roses

When writers fall out, says **Sally Vincent**, you can expect the pain to be awful in its eloquence. And when gay writers develop Aids, argues **Paul Burston**, they can teach all men the value of platonic love

**Sir Vidia's Shadow: A Friendship Across Five Continents**  
by Paul Theroux  
376pp, Hamish Hamilton, £17.99

You can see how they came to hit it off in the first place. Brave wandering souls, men of the wide world, seekers after truth, writers who took their work as seriously as they took themselves, which was very seriously indeed. When V.S. Naipaul spoke of "infies," Paul Theroux knew he meant "inferiors"; those who were not as they. There was an inclusiveness in the diminution that appealed to a prospect of superior intimacy, for surely a man would never say "infie" to an infie? Twenty-four years old and hoping to write for a living, you'd have to be a total stranger to vanity to pass up the chance of a mutual admiration society with an established literary lion just because he occasionally threw out the odd intimation of an overweening personality. Not, after 30-odd years of the fastidious intellectual and emotional propinquity men call friendship, would you expect to be uninfected by a similar arrogance.

The "shadow" of the title is a little puzzling in this context. If a shadow is the shape we cast when we stand

between light and substance, it is also the thing that proves we are not, as we might fear, holes in the air. Much of Theroux's text indicates, with and without irony, that he perceived himself as Naipaul's shadow in the sense of follower and helpmeet, page to his knight, attendant upon his most prosaic whim, ever proud of meeting absurdly exacting demands and accepting without rancour the most stringent terms of reciprocity from a man he also took to be an inveterate snob, a shameless free-loader, whoremonger and woman hater. Yet from same account we learn that, like all self-absorbed people, Naipaul was never ambiguous about his expression of himself, that his ruthless candour informed the relationship defined here as a friendship over 30 years and, yes, five continents, and that in that time and space he trusted himself to his friend without self-editing his many vices and solipsisms.

He never promised a rose garden. Apart from its exceptional articulacy, this was a long-term intimacy like any other between flawed individuals. Sadly, it seems to have been that articulacy that has unbalanced this scenario. A mean remark between friends is just that: a secret exposed, a small unlovely facet of the whole person to which the other has been made privy. Once such expressions are written down and nailed to print they are transformed into declarations. They become something unintentional, something that hovers uneasily between a false impression and a coarse caricature.

Theroux's perspective is necessarily passed along a prism of the pain of personal rejection. There could have been no other starting point. The man he remembers is eternally the man who closed the account, the traitor who for no known reason and with no explanation or apology, ended the friendship. To have the capacity to do such a brutal thing is infinitely mysterious, yet you cannot invite a friend or lover to collude in their own abandonment and walk calmly into the primal anguish it evokes. Partings are always engineered unilaterally and, one has to believe, for motives other than stark sadism. The axe that leaves a friend for dead is a horrible implement and the man who wields it has no alternative but to defend himself thereafter with the still more cruel weapons of absence and silence. Theroux describes the

final, accidental encounter with Naipaul when Naipaul's advice on how to bear rejection was to "take it on the chin". In the next breath, as it were, Theroux feels himself to be gloriously liberated, free at last to shine his own light on all that went before.

But again the perspective clouds narrative. It denies any preamble or clue to the break-up while simultaneously describing with fatal chronology a series of events that could have led nowhere else. One hears the wail of a downhearted frail woman divesting herself irrelevantly for the loss of her lover. SHE stole my man. He left me for THAT! For Sir Vidia married. Two months after the death of his first wife he had the temerity to re-enter matrimony with a lady unknown to Theroux except for the canvassed opinions of acquaintances who were pleased to fill him in with the benefit of their insights. She was a kind of Pakistani Glenda Slagg, an adventuresome who pretended knowledge of and passion for Naipaul's writing in order to commend herself to his vanity and his bed. Thereafter Theroux received a *billet doux* from an American bookseller, offering him options on first editions of his own books, signed by himself in happier days and presented to Naipaul and his late partner. The lady, he noted, was house clearing in her traditional way. Later there was a fax, unsolicited, scruffy, semi-literate and hostile from the lady herself.

Theroux cherishes the obvious impertinence and vulgarity of these missives. Knowing how profoundly offended Naipaul would be, how much he would suffer for the gracelessness of the documents — good grief, the fellow was so squeamish he'd rather starve to death than eat a vegetable "tainted" by a meaty spoon, rather lie awake than sleep on a bed "tainted" by the momentary proximity of a workman's bum — Theroux faced each of them, and posted them through the mail in case of interception, that Naipaul might countenance the evidence of his error of judgment. Knowing also, of course, that Naipaul was never a man to stand corrected.

The infies are wrong though. This is not and never was a literary feud.

If you would like to order a copy of Sir Vidia's Shadow, A Friendship Across Five Continents at the special price of £14.99 (plus 99p p&h), ring the Guardian CultureShop on 0500 600 102.

**Love Undetectable**  
by Andrew Sullivan  
272pp, Chatto & Windus, £9.99

In the first of the three extended essays that make up this book, the author makes a startling confession. Recalling the day in 1993 when he was informed that he was HIV-positive, Sullivan admits that he instinctively interpreted the diagnosis as some kind of retribution, as something that he deserved. In hindsight, he acknowledges that he hadn't succeeded in banishing the stigma and guilt associated with being homosexual, that deep down he still "loathed and feared an inextricable part of who I was".

It's a brave thing to admit, especially for a man in Sullivan's position. An "out" gay Catholic and former editor of the American right-wing journal *The New Republic*, whose previous book *Virtually Normal* called for gay men and women to embrace the institution of marriage, Sullivan has been condemned as a "gay conservative" by many in the gay rights movement. Doubtless there are some cheerleading gay critics out there who will leap gleefully upon the news that he is not an entirely happy homosexual, insist-

ing that this somehow disqualifies anything he has to say.

This would be a great shame because *Love Undetectable* is a remarkable book — a far better book, in fact, than *Virtually Normal*. The mainstream press heaped lavish praise on Sullivan's last book — rather more than it deserved. It is certainly true that *Virtually Normal* provided a detailed, reasoned argument in favour of gay assimilation. But for all that, there was little that wouldn't have been familiar to anyone acquainted with the history of gay politics. Groups like the Mattachine Society were putting forward similar arguments as far back as the 1950s.

*Love Undetectable* is very much a book about the way we live now. The first essay, "When Plagues End", assesses the impact of combination drug therapy on people with HIV, and its emotional and psychological implications for the gay world at large. Thanks to recent medical breakthroughs, people who only a few years ago were busy preparing themselves for death are now faced with the new challenge of preparing themselves for life. Drawing on his own experiences, and those of his friends, Sullivan describes the combination of relief, elation and

guilt that comes with being a survivor when so many have died.

He recalls visiting a bar with a fellow survivor, staring blankly at the wall where a dead friend once stood, and feeling "a numbing, deadening, saddening puzzlement" at the fact that "some of us were around and some of us were not". It's an extraordinary piece of writing, as rich in insight and profoundly moving as anything "the plague years" have produced.

The second essay, "Virtually Abnormal" tackles the issue he admits purposefully avoiding in his previous book, namely the origins of homosexuality. The old "nature or nurture?" debate has taken many turns in recent years, especially in America, where the current trend among gay activists is to put it down to biology. Faced with right-wing religious groups insisting that they have the power to "cure" people of their homosexuality, activists have gratefully accepted the theory of a "gay gene" which suggests that homosexuality is not only involuntary, but also immutable. Sullivan opts for the psychological approach, harking back to Freud and demonstrating how his theories on homosexuality have been distorted. According to Sullivan, Freud was far more interested in understanding

homosexuality than in resolving it, something which generations of therapists have conveniently overlooked.

"If Love Were All", the third and final essay, is really a companion piece to the first, insofar as it was inspired by the loss of a close friend. Describing how, during the Aids crisis, gay men came to appreciate the true value of friendship, Sullivan makes a convincing case for platonic love as the noblest of emotions in a society obsessed with sex and romance. Tackling the notion that heterosexuals have families while homosexuals are forced to make do with friends, he argues that both institutions are equally important, and that straight society actually has a lot to learn from the experience of gay men and women. In particular, he suggests that heterosexual men rarely experience friendship in its closest sense, such is the fear of male intimacy which pervades our culture. "This is why the movement for homosexual liberation is actually a misnomer," he writes. It is a movement for human liberation, and heterosexuals stand to gain from it as much as anyone.

Let's hope some of them at least take the time to read this book.

Paul Burston is the author of *Queers' Country* (Little, Brown).

### The List

**Classic Bob Dylan 1962-69: My Back Pages**, by Andy Gill (Carlin, £14.99)

The learned and properly hard-to-impress rock critic of the Independent here does for Dylan's sixties output roughly what Ian MacDonald did for the Beatles in his definitive *Revolution in the Head*. The he's-as-good-as-Keats comparison is one of the most odious postmodern clichés around (depressingly, it's what magisterial literary critic Christopher Ricks is most famous for), but Gill's anecdotal song-by-song approach, teasing out the Shakespearean allusions and evoking clouds of smoky studio ambience, makes for a fascinating cross-section through the cultural history of the period, even for non-fans.

**Charles: Victim or Villain?**, by Penny Junor (HarperCollins, £16.99)

If Charles is a victim, as this book finally argues, what words do we

have left for Stephen Lawrence or murdered Albanian families? Currency degradation aside, this journalistic volume draws on interviews with Charles's friends (but none with the man himself) to provide a fair-minded rejoinder to Andrew Morton's credulous *Diana* book, to show that the man who once claimed to be descended from Vlad the Impaler isn't quite such a leavie as the candle-in-the-wind mob thinks. Lots of nice colour photographs, the caption to one of which reads: "Charles... even gave away the dog he loved in an effort to make Diana happy", which is perhaps a little harsh on Camilla.

**The Traveller's Guide to Hell**, by Michael Pauls & Dana Fecaroe (Cadogan, £4.99)

A little red *trade-means* for those about to jump into their handbags. The blurb is horribly facetious, but if you can manage to read the text, usually superimposed over pic-

tures, you will find a well-researched cultural history of the bells of various religions. Not so much a compendium as a pandemonium.

**Jung On Synchronicity and the Paranormal**, ed Frederick Main (Princeton/Routledge, £14.99)

Old Carl Gustav would have devoured the Fortean Times annual below. His theory of synchronicity held that the cosmos is governed by a non-causal system of meaningful coincidences, or "parallelisms in time". This idea — a popular, desperate rebellion against the absurd by rationalists throughout the ages — was developed by Jung from his studies of Chinese philosophy, in which a random system, the I Ching, is used for prophecy, and also from dreams in which the psychologist was visited by assorted colourful spirits. What can be said in Jung's favour is that he kept a resolutely open mind about paranormal phenomena, and was

energetically curious about everything — from the rabid nonsense of seances and astrology, to the more opaquely intriguing reports of poltergeists and telepathy.

**Fortean Times Weird World 1999**, ed Mark Pilkington & Joe McNally (John Brown, £8.99)

Highly entertaining almanac of eldritch phenomena from around the globe, including strange deaths (a man exploded after heat from a surgeon's scalpel ignited methane in his stomach), deathly Hungarian slime from the sky, news on the face supposedly carved into the Martian landscape by aliens, a drunken rampage of elephants raiding a Bangladeshi brewery, and a Latin American vampire. Fortean prose is playful yet sceptical, and always deadpan: after a man took a chainsaw to 200 trees, apparently, "Police were stumped as to a motive." **Steven Poole**

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## Go on, Marina, scare us

**No Go the Boggymen**  
by Marina Warner  
436pp, Chatto, £25

**Cressida Connolly**

Elsewhere in the world, intelligence is applauded: only in England does the mean-spirited phrase "too clever by half" exist. The prevailing belief here is that cleverness is not to be rewarded, but brought down by a peg or two. In such a climate it's a miracle that Marina Warner manages to get published at all, because she is guilty not only of extreme learning but also of unfettered, exuberant use of obscure words. She thinks nothing of writing such a phrase as "clithonic consubstantiality" and she never uses one word where two or three will do. It is impossible not to be dazzled by the brilliance of her.

*No Go the Boggymen* is intended as a study of fear, but from the outset it is clear that there are to be two gaping holes in the book. Firstly, since Warner has already written about the feminine personification of badness — witches and wicked stepmothers and all — in her book on fairy tales (the excellent *From the Beast to the Blonde*) she attempts to concentrate on male demons here. This creates a major problem, because boggymen are, by and large, much less frightening than boggymen. Giants and ogres are chummy and stupid whereas their feminine counterparts are invested with cunning and intelligence, which is far more menacing. Mr Punch is no match for the queen in *Snow White*. And what man can compete with her? Even Frankenstein's monster and Dracula look pretty limp by comparison. Secondly, and more gravely, Warner chooses to eschew the question of evil altogether. Since the most feared of all male figures is the very embodiment of evil — Satan — this book cannot but be imbalanced by the exclusion.

It's a testament to her wit and learning that she manages to write about fear at all, with such deliberate omissions. With women and evil out of the picture — or nearly, because both do creep into these pages — she is left with a lot of not-quite-scary-enough material; spooky cradle songs, dragons, dwarves; the panoply of creatures neither wholly animal nor yet fully human. Warner cites centuries of supporting material: from Homer to Roald Dahl, from Kronos devouring his children to Dennis Hopper stalking through a David Lynch movie. There is a surfeit of reference: *No Go the Boggymen* too often reads like a catalogue of Warner's own erudition, rather than an investigation into terror and how humans attempted to come to terms with it. This is cultural history, with all the limitations which the term suggests. Fear is too interesting and complex a subject to be treated in this way, and it is only when Warner breaks out of the fetters of bibliography and allows herself an opinion, a rogue conjecture, that the book becomes really interesting.

Fairy stories and creation myths have been subjected to a wealth of psychological investigation during the past 50 years or so, but Warner does not incorporate any of this fascinating material into her book. Still, perhaps it is churlish to bemoan what has been left out of this book when so much that is original and scholarly has been included. No one else (apart from Love, according to Warner) has made a study of hallelujahs, with their creepy mixture of the soothing and scolding. The predominantly melancholy feeling of these songs is explained by the fact that the minor third dominates hallelujahs, internationally: this is the sort of midget which Warner is so good at measuring.

It is impossible not to feel that what *No Go the Boggymen* needed was an editor equal to the task, someone who could have pointed out to Warner that her thoughts on Goya are out of place here, but more deplorable in a volume of their own; that anthropology requires work in the field, not only the library; that an essay on the racist undercurrent of jokes about bananas should have been published elsewhere than in a book about fear; that the wonderful epilogue should have been extended beyond its meagre 13 pages. As it is, the book will be more referred to than read. It isn't that Marina Warner isn't clever enough, which accounts for the fact that this book is a mess. But at least it is a delightful, enchanting, discursive, funny, erudite mess which almost — but not quite — succeeds in conceding its shambles by blinding the reader with its qualities.

Journalists, said a wit, are people with nothing to say, who know how to say it. Like Bill Bryson, perhaps?

## My country or a deadline

**Notes from a Big Country**  
by Bill Bryson  
318pp, Doubleday, £16.99

**Robert Potts**

One holiday I had to try to sleep while my partner lay next to me reading Bill Bryson's *The Lost Continent*. His guffaws every two pages or so were more obtrusive than snoring or mosquitoes. The requested suppression of the laughter led only to a regular and silent shaking of the bed, which in the 1970s would have been an expensive, if cheesy, design feature, but in the 1990s I found an unrequested and unwelcome extra. I gave up, and eventually took my revenge by reading the

book myself. It had been like being benignly cuckolded. Bryson made his name as the anti-travel writer, going to accessible places, and finding them the opposite of exotic. Ox-eyed as Odysseus but sully as Achilles, he crabbily voiced his complaints with the flame-grilling phrases that come to most of us in *esprit de fusillade* (and sometimes did to him). Curiously, though, he seemed charmingly bewildered that his already low expectations could still be thwarted. Remembering his dad's meanness with money, he was hilariously unaware of his own horror at the sheer expense of, well, almost anything. An American who had found his own country newly strange on a brief return from ex-pat life in England, he has now settled back in the US for a

decent stretch. This collection of articles for the Mail on Sunday shows him as the tourist of everywhere, day-tripping through the quotidian and feeling frequently short-changed. Bryson is in some ways perfect over the short distance; his other books are a medley of spats rather than a sustained marathon. But the weekly column has its own limitations, as British newspaper readers have become stoically aware. Bryson is great when explaining the idiosyncrasies of America to middle England and making it funny — after all, few countries so consistently offer madness beyond the nightmares of parodists and satirists. He is both serious and contemptuously funny in pieces on subjects like the IRS, gun laws,

capital punishment, the inefficiency of the FBI, and on the grosser side to choice, convenience and junk food ("Artificial bacon bits, melted cheese in a shade of yellow unknown to nature, and creamy chocolate filling, sometimes in the same product — food that squirts when you bite into it or pops on your shirt front in such gross quantities that you have to rise carefully from the table and limbo over to the sink to clean yourself up"). But every so often we get, naturally, the desperation of the man filing copy under pressure with nothing to say. (Bryson is unusual only in that this did not happen every week.) Articles on computer spell checkers, random collections of urban myths, Christmas decorations, doing the gardening

and so on, are the work of a humourist going through the motions. His forays into sentimentality (kids going to college; the beauty of trees in New Hampshire during the fall) expose, as in his other books, a much weaker vocabulary of the positive than of the negative. The absence of a real point to some of this stuff becomes clearer when Bryson, with obvious relief, has filed enough words. At which point he writes something like, "And now, if you'll excuse me I've got to go and do something ironically apropos of my subject matter in a blatant rush to a weak punchline and my pay cheque". The book could have been shorter, yet better, if Bryson hadn't printed the lot.

In *The Lost Continent* Bryson ended up in a tiny, weeny hotel room in New York, alone and dismayed by the tat and sadness of the sleaze in Times Square. "I couldn't help but reflect that I had no reason to feel superior to my fellow lonely hearts in the strip-tease club 20 floors below. I was just as lonesome as they were. Indeed, all over this big heartless city there were no doubt tens of thousands of people just as solitary and friendless as me. What a melancholy thought. 'But I wonder how many of them can do this?' I remarked to myself and with both hands and both feet reached out and touched all four walls at once." And likewise, Bryson is at his best in space slightly larger, and more sophisticated, than the Mail on Sunday; but as ever, he makes more than most of his environment.



"I've been reading all those things they've writ about me..." Patti Smith, visiting her fans in Britain

PHOTOGRAPH: TRICIA LING

Andy Warhol, Lou Reed, John Cale, Patti Smith... **Michael Bracewell** on a one-man prose machine for punk

## Victor in pursuit of real Velvet

**Patti Smith**  
by Victor Bockris  
278pp, Fourth Estate, £16.99

As recounted by Victor Bockris, the poet and punk rock icon Patti Smith first unveiled her additional talent for smart one-liners and oblique prophecy by assessing her own appeal from the stage of the Bottom Line Club in downtown New York, during one of her performances in 1976 as a hot new star. "It was like Patti Smith could walk on water, like she had melded with each liquid moment as she stamined the crowd with in-between-the-song-patter like *Leaky Bruce's* kid sister. 'I am... the first...' Patti Smith, she intoned. 'I've been reading all these articles about me [the New York Times had just come out with their Sunday magazine profile] and I'm checking myself out... and I think that what it is... I got a lot of — posthumous appeal'."

A brilliant architect of her own glamour, who knew how to rehearse her biographical legend, Patti Smith has the ability to make

self-dismissive humour double as subtle mockery of her critics. Twenty years after her early triumphant gig at the Bottom Line, Smith would refer once more, this time from the stage of the Manchester Apollo, to the many books, articles and doctoral theses which her life and work, now legendary within the annals of cultural history and punk rock studies, have inspired. "I've been reading all these things that they've writ about me, saying how I come across like a shaman or a visionary or whatever. But the truth is... I'm senile." And 14 months after that, when asked to accept a music industry award in the UK for being "inspirational", Smith peered at the assembled crowd over the top of her spider-thin glasses, shook her head and said, "I thought I'd come and see what I've inspired... not much by the looks of things." She also took great exception to being described by Bono of U2 as his "sister, mother and lover..." and began her rebuke of the mega-star with the words, "screw you Bono..."

It could also be said that during an interview with the *Saturday Weekend* magazine section of this

newspaper Patti Smith expressed such irritation over the fact that her biography was being written by Victor Bockris, that it seemed wisest not to publish her comments. It therefore comes as no surprise that Bockris has had little or no direct assistance with this biography from anyone in Patti Smith's current immediate circle of friends and colleagues. According to the source notes, neither Lenny Kaye — her longest standing friend and associate, with whom she has performed and written for nearly 30 years — nor Tom Verlaine, of Television, which whom she has shared the cultural context of her career, have made themselves available for this book, and the result is an uneven and frustrating montage of sourced material from a host of publications and writers.

Old reviews from the NME and Melody Maker, for instance, are forced to stand in as representative analysis of Smith's career as a recording artist. And, while Bockris is wholly sensitive to the collaging of this secondary material, there is neither the narrative coherence nor the authorial confidence that would be required to

describe the extraordinary Bohemian fable of Patti Smith's life to date — from "savage Rimbaud to St John of the Cross", as Edmund White has described her — in the detail which it requires.

Much of the earlier history that is covered in this biography, in fact, was presented in sharper focus by Patricia Morrisroe's weighty and dramatically taut biography of the late Robert Mapplethorpe, who lived with Smith during the vitally formative years of poverty in the early 1970s, prior to their both being "discovered" as sharp young representatives of the new artistic community which had emerged out of the Andy Warholian dictate to blur the boundaries between art and personality. Similarly, Clinton Heylin's whole history of Patti Smith's underground milieu, *The Velvet to the Voidoids: A Pre-Punk History for a Post-Punk World* (1998), possesses a journalistic rawness in its direct transcription of interviews with the principal figures in the New York underground, which the more ambitious but unrealised scope of this current biography exchanges for the generalisations

of biographical shorthand.

Thus, in many ways *Patti Smith* works best as a factual source book and bibliography, rather than a critical biography. And this is a great shame, because Victor Bockris has proven himself to be a brilliant biographer, not least in his superb book about Andy Warhol and his collaboration with the poet and former Warhol Factory major-domo, Gerard Malanga, in 1983, on *Uptight: The Velvet Underground Story*. But having written a patchy biography of Lou Reed, in 1994, and now Patti Smith, with a biography of John Cale due early next year — there is a sense that he has turned into a one-man assembly line, knocking out biographies of the Warhol and New York punk rock crowd in a way that doesn't do justice to either his own skill as an historian and cultural pathologist, nor to the baroque complexity of his principal subject: namely how a generation of New York artists and personalities, emerging in the middle years of the 1960s, danced on the grave of Freak Power to become the cultural obiticians of punk rock.

Bockris has also been forced to struggle with two entirely practical

problems for a biographer. In the first place, his most recent subjects — Reed, Smith and Cale — are still only in their late fifties, and as such have not lived out whatever drama or significance their lives might ultimately possess. In his work on Warhol by contrast, Bockris was in a position to make a virtually operatic drama out of his subject's life, and to balance the narrative tension of the story — and good biographies tend to be great stories — over the fulcrum of the assassination attempt on Warhol in 1968. In the second place, Bockris has been actively opposed by both Lou Reed and Patti Smith — be that from peevishness, ego mania or fear of exposure in his attempts to write about them. This has made for rather lop-sided research, and a nose-dive into little more than chronological list-making of principal events in his subjects' lives once one gets to the perimeter fence of the late 1970s and the limits of Bockris's first hand experience.

Victor Bockris can be a great writer and is a lucid witness to a fascinating era; but perhaps his next book should be his autobiography.

# arts



For five centuries the Vienna Boys Choir had been run by men. Then a woman got the job — and dared to treat the singers as children. She couldn't last. **Kate Connolly** reports

## Who let that woman in?

The world-famous Vienna Boys Choir rounds off a month-long UK tour tomorrow with a 500th anniversary performance at London's Royal Festival Hall. Unknown to the British public, the seraphic faces and harmonious tones hide a drama of discord and dissent being played out back home in conservative Austria.

While the all-boy troupe in their Von Trapp suits have been doing their ambassadorial bit, their artistic director — the first woman ever to hold the post — has walked out, saying that her boys were being overworked and exploited. Inevitably, many in Vienna are also claiming she was pushed because she's a woman.

Agnes Grossmann, a feisty 54-year-old, came to the choir in January 1997. Formerly chief conductor of the Orchestre Métropolitain de Montréal, she was seen as an

embodiment of the changes sweeping the music world in Vienna. The daughter of a former leader of the choir (her father, Ferdinand, had the job before and after the second world war), she joined the organisation after returning from Canada. She had crossed the Atlantic in the seventies after deciding there was no future for a female conductor in Vienna.

Women musicians applauded her return, seeing her as a force for modernisation. And there's no denying it was needed. At the 155-year-old Vienna Philharmonic, the sole female musician, harpist Anna Leskes, was made a full member only last year, having spent 27 years tucked away in the back row. Until 1995, her name never even appeared in the programme, and television cameras were allowed to show only her hands. Not long after Grossmann's

appointment, the orchestra bowed to pressure and allowed women to audition for the first time.

Grossmann set her face against die-hard traditionalism, and she certainly made her presence felt during her time with the choir, turning her formidable attention to everything from the repertoire to the canteen menu at the baroque Augarten Palace, home to the 100 choristers. "They told us they wanted to have more chips and hamburgers, so we put it on the menu," she explained.

When I met her before her resignation, Grossmann opened her office door all smiles, chic in a black trouser suit and silk neckscarf, lovingly ushering out a couple of blond-haired juniors from the kindergarden. The centrepiece of her impressive wood-paneled room was a modern, striped chaise longue.

The first sign that things were going to be tough came six months into Grossmann's tenure, when the choir's director, Dr Walter Tauschnig, resigned, blaming her radical views. He had been accused of running the choir with iron discipline and, partly under pressure from parents, Grossmann set to work abolishing his military training drills and gruelling concert schedules.

She had also made waves by announcing that she intended to widen the choir's repertoire — traditionally Mozart, Haydn and Schubert — to include pop and jazz. "Children have a great affinity with pop music, particularly in terms of rhythmic feeling," she said.

Along with the managing director, 30-year-old Manfred Seipt, Grossmann then set about changing other age-old customs, allowing the boys to wake and go to bed an hour later. In Blairite fashion, she called in interior designers to revamp the 300-year-old palace, after consulting with the choristers and kindergarden. "We had a waiting wall on which they listed all their complaints," says Seipt.

The boys' six bedrooms were adapted to take beanbags, hammocks, TV sets and quiet corners where they can listen to their Walkmans. The walls are plastered with posters of Michael Jordan. Men in Black, the Spice Girls, Baywatch and even topless women.

Grossmann also encouraged the boys to broaden their artistic interests. "These boys are with us for about four years, until their voices break, so an integral part of their education is focused on the time afterwards, when they will leave,"



she said. "We encourage them to go to the cinema, to pop concerts, to other classical concerts. That even included cuddling up with the Spice Girls. In May the boys fought for the honour of presenting the band with sailor-suited teddy bears. A psychologist and a team of educational specialists were

**'She's cool,' the boys told me. 'The food's better and we have more time for our Game Boys'**

brought in to prepare the boys for the "traumatic and very delicate time when they reach puberty". In the past they had only a Catholic priest to turn to.

The school is so protective I was not allowed to interview the children. I was forced to steal words with them when they returned from lunch and rowdily made their way to the lobby, where

a crew was filming for a Christmas Day broadcast.

What's it like being led by a woman? "It doesn't make much difference if it's a man or a woman," said one, "as long as she's good — and she is. She's cool."

What about the changes? "The food is much better and I have more time to play my Game Boy," said another.

The children's happiness and enjoyment are paramount, Grossmann stressed, as she did away with the military-style regime. This included reducing the concert schedule for the four groups that make up the choir. Many of the boys spend up to a third of the year performing abroad.

But concerts are an integral part of the choir's estimated £1.7 million annual turnover. Fewer concerts means less revenue, and when an increase in state subsidies was not forthcoming, Grossmann took a typically pragmatic approach and launched a line of Vienna Boys Choir merchandise — everything from sweatshirts to Augarten Palace snow-shakers.

She also targeted sexism. In the 19th century, at the time of the Vienna Court Opera, women were told to remain silent in church. When female voices were required,



**Ancient and modern...** For many at the Vienna Boys Choir, nothing is more sacred than tradition, as embodied by the sailor-suit uniforms (top). But artistic director Agnes Grossmann (above) never forgot that her charges were human. She even gave them the sort of bedrooms they might have had at home (left)

split over the issue. Austrian papers report that some have threatened to withdraw their children, starting a strike just before their busiest time of the year. Imre Szanto, parent representative for one of the choirs, said that he was trying to quell a mini-rebellion. "Of course, when you have 100 lively lads and 200 parents, there are bound to be various opinions. Some of them are more radical, others less so. There's certainly a revolt going on here. But we're trying to persuade them that there's no point in ruining pre-Christmas concerts or going on strike."

It is not yet clear how Grossmann's departure will affect the liberalisation of Augarten. Or, indeed, the musical prowess of the choir, which counts among its alumni Haydn and Schubert.

For all the discipline, the choir had been in decline before Grossmann's arrival. The boys were increasingly criticised for their poor and disorderly performances, and bookings had fallen. For the first time, they were no longer considered Austria's premier choir.

Joan Holender, director of the Vienna State Opera, had accused the boys of "musical weakness". "When they appear," he said, "they are badly prepared and are poor performers. As far as intonation is concerned, they are sloppy."

Grossmann had been working on the music, and critics were recovering their enthusiasm. But she also insisted that, for all the importance of sound quality, intonation and rhythmic precision, her boys were still just boys. As they made clear at a recent charity concert in the silver and gold chapel of the Imperial Palace, they're not above wiping their noses on their sailor-suit sleeves or grinning theatrically when the organist hits a bum note. It was so obvious that they would rather have been playing snowballs outside that I half wondered if their mischief itself had become a marketing tool.

The hope in Vienna now is that Grossmann has made her mark, restoring another, more benevolent tradition that the choir's management would do well to remember. In the 19th century, when Bruckner was court organist, rehearsing his masses with the choir, he understood the value of a little human kindness. He would reward them with slices of Sachertorte.

The Vienna Boys Choir will sing at the Royal Festival Hall, London SW1 (0171-480 4242), tomorrow at 2.30pm.

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Tomorrow at 10pm on Channel 4

Based on Nick Hornby's best-selling autobiography, *Fever Pitch* is a romantic comedy about thirty-something Paul — a passionate Arsenal fan. Paul follows his team's progress keenly as they challenge for the League Championship, but his girlfriend, Sarah, doesn't share his love of football. As Arsenal's challenge falters, so does their relationship — only victory in a crucial away match can help Sarah understand that football is more than 'just a game' and save their relationship.

**4**

John G. 150

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## Racing

# Toiseach fits the brandy bill

**Ron Cox expects Fanshawe's in-form stable to strike gold in Hennessy**

**T**HE TOISEACH, a lightly-weighted, progressive chaser in his second season over fences, fits the profile of a potential Hennessy Cognac Gold Cup winner.

From a stable in form and effective on pretty much any ground, James Fanshawe's seven-year-old has plenty going for him in what should be a cracking renewal of the race for the brandy at Newbury today.

Sunny Bay, currently the highest-rated chaser in training, defied 11st 8lb when successful last year but eight of the nine previous winners were bracketed in the 10st to 10st 8lb weight range.

With all due respect to this year's top-weight, Coome Hill, who races off a mark of 150, he is no Sunny Bay and the race has opened up for a progressive performer such as The Toiseach.

Due to go up 13lb to a mark of 148 in future handicaps, The Toiseach runs off 139 here and is 4lb lower than when scoring by 11 lengths at Ascot seven days ago. He made his only mistake four out, but quickly recovered to pull 11 lengths clear of Court Melody who had previously beaten Call It A Day and The Last Fling at Sandown — with Gold Cup winner Cool Dawn third.

There is the chance the Hennessy will come too soon after his Ascot exertions, but Fanshawe reports the gelding has taken the Dunwoody trial, he is on a good mark and can also be illustrated by the fact that Mahler, beaten 28 lengths by The Toiseach at Ascot in February, re-appears on 2lb worse terms.

The Toiseach has an outstanding record in the weights, but Tecton Mill is not far behind. He is also penalised just 4lb for an emphatic win, this time in the Badger Beer Chase at Wincanton.

canton — the race Coome Hill won prior to his 1996 Hennessy triumph.

Like the majority of Venetia Williams's runners, Tecton Mill was fit for his first run of the season at Wincanton and there may not be that much improvement to come. But a similar level of performance will make him a danger to all.

Seven Towers looks the most interesting of the higher-weighted runners. Backward when behind Boss Doyle — needs to jump better — at Wetherby, he idled in front when winning at Ayr next time.

Through an out-and-out stayer, Seven Towers showed he was no plodder when slugging Lord Gyllene by seven lengths in a fast-run Midlands Grand National at Uttoxeter two seasons ago.

The ground is unlikely to be soft enough for Fiddling The Facts, in which case her jumping might let her down. She goes well when fresh, though, and lack of a recent run should not count against her.

Fine Thyme, who just ran out of stamina when splitting Call It A Day (5lb worse for five lengths) and Eudipe in the Whitbread Gold Cup last season, and Seven Towers might give The Toiseach (2.30) most to do.

If Timmy Murphy can get Sir Talbot to jump cleanly, Jim Old's four-year-old should go close in the Gerry Felden Hurdle. Even from the back of the pack, he looks well treated, but Sir Talbot was far from fluent when scraping home at Chepstow.

In a highly competitive race, Easter Ross carries stable confidence and it would be no surprise to see Richard Dunwoody try to make all on Wabba Sands, who is having his first run for Martin Pipe. But it might pay to give another chance to Decoupage (1.15).

On both his starts this season, Decoupage has been fourth out by the unflinching Cheltenham. Creditable fourth to Grey Shot last time, he should be better suited by coming off a stronger pace on a flatter track.



That's my boy... Noel Fehily leading the way on Ivy Boy (right) at Newbury yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: JULIAN HERBERT

## Smooth Passage for Thornton

Chris Hawkins

**S**TORMY PASSAGE was a fluent winner of the Jacky Upton Chase at Newbury yesterday and now looks set for a clash with Cyfor Malta in the Triplemint Gold Cup at Cheltenham in a fortnight.

Andrew Thornton had only to shake-up Stormy Passage on the run-in to beat Mr Strong Gale by three lengths but what made this an impressive performance was the fact that the runner-up was still on the bit and cantering

ing at the second last. Timmy Murphy, rider of Mr Strong Gale, thought the result might have been different if he had kicked on earlier but such recriminations were unnecessary — Stormy Passage was pulling the proverbial milk cart.

"He's been plagued by breaking blood vessels, otherwise he'd have had much more racing, but hopefully we've ironed out the problem," said Peter Hobbs, the gelding's trainer.

Bold Gait looked a good thing in the Tote Placepot Handicap Hurdle with only

10st 6lb and backers duly collected on the 11-10 favourite

— but not before some nail-biting moments.

A stewards inquiry was called after Bold Gait had drifted right on the run-in, crossing the second Toteur who was beaten only three-quarters of a length. The consensus view among punters was that the outcome had not been affected, however, and the stewards agreed.

Bold Gait looked a shade short of acceleration and, James Fanshawe, his Newmarket-based trainer, intimated that he will now be

upped in trip to enable him to bring his abundant stamina into play.

His win was welcome relief for favourite backers who had been smarting after the earlier defeats of Door To Door and Village King. Richard Dunwoody reported that Village King, attempting a five-time, seemed not to stay the three miles of the Oxfordshire Novices Chase when failing to couple with Ivy Boy ridden by Noel Fehily.

The 22-year-old Irish amateur was ecstatic over his win, particularly as Dunwoody was his boyhood idol.

## Newbury Jackpot card

12.45	1.15	1.45	2.20	2.50	3.20
Knightbridge Scott	Decoupage	Martello	The Toiseach (imp)	Greenes Green Desert	Medallite
1.15	1.45	2.20	2.50	3.20	3.50
1.15	1.45	2.20	2.50	3.20	3.50

Ood, left-handed circuit of 11m with 255yds run-in. Wide and galloping in nature with easy bends. Going: Good. • Denotes winners. • Top form rating. Stewards day winners: 2.20 The Toiseach. Blistered first time: None. Visited: None. Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. F, Flat.

## 12.45 FULKE WALWYN CHASE

12.45	1.15	1.45	2.20	2.50	3.20
12.45	1.15	1.45	2.20	2.50	3.20
12.45	1.15	1.45	2.20	2.50	3.20

12.45 FULKE WALWYN CHASE (2m 4f 85.764 (6 declared))  
12.45 FULKE WALWYN CHASE (2m 4f 85.764 (6 declared))  
12.45 FULKE WALWYN CHASE (2m 4f 85.764 (6 declared))

## 1.15 EMMY FINANCIAL GERRY FELDEN HCAP HURDLE

1.15	1.45	2.20	2.50	3.20	3.50
1.15	1.45	2.20	2.50	3.20	3.50
1.15	1.45	2.20	2.50	3.20	3.50

1.15 EMMY FINANCIAL GERRY FELDEN HCAP HURDLE (2m 11yds £12,250 (10 declared))  
1.15 EMMY FINANCIAL GERRY FELDEN HCAP HURDLE (2m 11yds £12,250 (10 declared))  
1.15 EMMY FINANCIAL GERRY FELDEN HCAP HURDLE (2m 11yds £12,250 (10 declared))

## 1.45 SOLAGLAS LONG DISTANCE HURDLE

1.45	2.20	2.50	3.20	3.50	3.50
1.45	2.20	2.50	3.20	3.50	3.50
1.45	2.20	2.50	3.20	3.50	3.50

1.45 SOLAGLAS LONG DISTANCE HURDLE (3m 11yds £12,620 (6 declared))  
1.45 SOLAGLAS LONG DISTANCE HURDLE (3m 11yds £12,620 (6 declared))  
1.45 SOLAGLAS LONG DISTANCE HURDLE (3m 11yds £12,620 (6 declared))

## 2.20 HENNESSY COGNAC GOLD CUP HANDICAP CHASE

2.20	2.50	3.20	3.50	3.50	3.50
2.20	2.50	3.20	3.50	3.50	3.50
2.20	2.50	3.20	3.50	3.50	3.50

2.20 HENNESSY COGNAC GOLD CUP HANDICAP CHASE (3m 21yds £10,475 (7 declared))  
2.20 HENNESSY COGNAC GOLD CUP HANDICAP CHASE (3m 21yds £10,475 (7 declared))  
2.20 HENNESSY COGNAC GOLD CUP HANDICAP CHASE (3m 21yds £10,475 (7 declared))

## 1.30 NORTHGATE TRUCK RENTAL NOVICE HURDLE

1.30	2.20	2.50	3.20	3.50	3.50
1.30	2.20	2.50	3.20	3.50	3.50
1.30	2.20	2.50	3.20	3.50	3.50

1.30 NORTHGATE TRUCK RENTAL NOVICE HURDLE (2m 23yds (18 declared))  
1.30 NORTHGATE TRUCK RENTAL NOVICE HURDLE (2m 23yds (18 declared))  
1.30 NORTHGATE TRUCK RENTAL NOVICE HURDLE (2m 23yds (18 declared))

## 2.50 JIM JOEL MEMORIAL HANDICAP CHASE

2.50	3.20	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50
2.50	3.20	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50
2.50	3.20	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50

2.50 JIM JOEL MEMORIAL HANDICAP CHASE (2m 11yds £15,952 (4 declared))  
2.50 JIM JOEL MEMORIAL HANDICAP CHASE (2m 11yds £15,952 (4 declared))  
2.50 JIM JOEL MEMORIAL HANDICAP CHASE (2m 11yds £15,952 (4 declared))

## 3.20 NEWBURY SAAB HURDLE

3.20	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50
3.20	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50
3.20	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50

3.20 NEWBURY SAAB HURDLE (2m 11yds £24,858 (13 declared))  
3.20 NEWBURY SAAB HURDLE (2m 11yds £24,858 (13 declared))  
3.20 NEWBURY SAAB HURDLE (2m 11yds £24,858 (13 declared))

## 2.10 TIM MOLLOY MEMORIAL HANDICAP CHASE

2.10	2.50	3.20	3.50	3.50	3.50
2.10	2.50	3.20	3.50	3.50	3.50
2.10	2.50	3.20	3.50	3.50	3.50

2.10 TIM MOLLOY MEMORIAL HANDICAP CHASE (2m 11yds £10,211 (6 declared))  
2.10 TIM MOLLOY MEMORIAL HANDICAP CHASE (2m 11yds £10,211 (6 declared))  
2.10 TIM MOLLOY MEMORIAL HANDICAP CHASE (2m 11yds £10,211 (6 declared))

## 1.00 GUINNESS NOVICE CHASE

1.00	1.45	2.20	2.50	3.20	3.50
1.00	1.45	2.20	2.50	3.20	3.50
1.00	1.45	2.20	2.50	3.20	3.50

1.00 GUINNESS NOVICE CHASE (2m 11yds £3,485 (11 declared))  
1.00 GUINNESS NOVICE CHASE (2m 11yds £3,485 (11 declared))  
1.00 GUINNESS NOVICE CHASE (2m 11yds £3,485 (11 declared))

## 1.30 NORTHGATE TRUCK RENTAL NOVICE HURDLE

1.30	2.20	2.50	3.20	3.50	3.50
1.30	2.20	2.50	3.20	3.50	3.50
1.30	2.20	2.50	3.20	3.50	3.50

1.30 NORTHGATE TRUCK RENTAL NOVICE HURDLE (2m 23yds (18 declared))  
1.30 NORTHGATE TRUCK RENTAL NOVICE HURDLE (2m 23yds (18 declared))  
1.30 NORTHGATE TRUCK RENTAL NOVICE HURDLE (2m 23yds (18 declared))

## Haydock programme

1.10	1.40	2.10	2.40	3.10	3.40
1.10	1.40	2.10	2.40	3.10	3.40
1.10	1.40	2.10	2.40	3.10	3.40

1.10 MOBILES BY MAIL CLAIMING HURDLE (2m 4f 85.764 (6 declared))  
1.10 MOBILES BY MAIL CLAIMING HURDLE (2m 4f 85.764 (6 declared))  
1.10 MOBILES BY MAIL CLAIMING HURDLE (2m 4f 85.764 (6 declared))

## 1.40 WESTGATE HANDICAP HURDLE

1.40	2.20	2.50	3.20	3.50	3.50
1.40	2.20	2.50	3.20	3.50	3.50
1.40	2.20	2.50	3.20	3.50	3.50

1.40 WESTGATE HANDICAP HURDLE (2m 4f 85.764 (6 declared))  
1.40 WESTGATE HANDICAP HURDLE (2m 4f 85.764 (6 declared))  
1.40 WESTGATE HANDICAP HURDLE (2m 4f 85.764 (6 declared))

## 2.10 TIM MOLLOY MEMORIAL HANDICAP CHASE

2.10	2.50	3.20	3.50	3.50	3.50
2.10	2.50	3.20	3.50	3.50	3.50
2.10	2.50	3.20	3.50	3.50	3.50

2.10 TIM MOLLOY MEMORIAL HANDICAP CHASE (2m 11yds £10,211 (6 declared))  
2.10 TIM MOLLOY MEMORIAL HANDICAP CHASE (2m 11yds £10,211 (6 declared))  
2.10 TIM MOLLOY MEMORIAL HANDICAP CHASE (2m 11yds £10,211 (6 declared))

## 2.00 DOUGLAS SMITH MEMORIAL HANDICAP CHASE

2.00	2.50	3.20	3.50	3.50	3.50
2.00	2.50	3.20	3.50	3.50	3.50
2.00	2.50	3.20	3.50	3.50	3.50

2.00 DOUGLAS SMITH MEMORIAL HANDICAP CHASE (2m 4f 85.764 (6 declared))  
2.00 DOUGLAS SMITH MEMORIAL HANDICAP CHASE (2m 4f 85.764 (6 declared))  
2.00 DOUGLAS SMITH MEMORIAL HANDICAP CHASE (2m 4f 85.764 (6 declared))

## 2.30 FIGHTING FIFTH HURDLE

2.30	2.50	3.20	3.50	3.50	3.50
2.30	2.50	3.20	3.50	3.50	3.50
2.30	2.50	3.20	3.50	3.50	3.50

2.30 FIGHTING FIFTH HURDLE (2m 21yds £7,770 (6 declared))  
2.30 FIGHTING FIFTH HURDLE (2m 21yds £7,770 (6 declared))  
2.30 FIGHTING FIFTH HURDLE (2m 21yds £7,770 (6 declared))

## 3.00 JASHER REIT-A-CAR HANDICAP CHASE

3.00	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50
3.00	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50
3.00	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50

3.00 JASHER REIT-A-CAR HANDICAP CHASE (2m 4f 85.764 (6 declared))  
3.00 JASHER REIT-A-CAR HANDICAP CHASE (2m 4f 85.764 (6 declared))  
3.00 JASHER REIT-A-CAR HANDICAP CHASE (2m 4f 85.764 (6 declared))

## 3.35 STANLEY RACING AMATEUR RIDERS' HANDICAP HURDLE

3.35	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50
3.35	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50
3.35	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50

3.35 STANLEY RACING AMATEUR RIDERS' HANDICAP HURDLE (2m 4f 85.764 (6 declared))  
3.35 STANLEY RACING AMATEUR RIDERS' HANDICAP HURDLE (2m 4f 85.764 (6 declared))  
3.35 STANLEY RACING AMATEUR RIDERS' HANDICAP HURDLE (2m 4f 85.764 (6 declared))

## HORSE SENSE

Written by those in the know

**THOMAS TATE** ended a lean spell when Hardacre won at Hexham in midweek, and the Tadcaster trainer will be looking to follow up with Aghawadda Gold in the Guinness Novice Chase at Newcastle today.

This former Irish point-to-point winner won three times over hurdles last season, but he has always been regarded as first and foremost a chasing prospect.

Recent schooling sessions have gone particularly well and Aghawadda Gold has the potential to develop into one of the top novices in the north.

Unfortunately the news is not so good concerning stable star Ask Tom, who flopped in the Queen Mother Champion Chase and was later revealed to have undergone a troubled preparation. Leg problems could keep the nine-year-old on the sidelines for the whole of the season.

But in the shape of Splendid Melody, Tate has an interesting newcomer to carry the colours of Ask Tom's owner Brian Stewart-Brown.

**Needed the run**  
Like Ask Tom and Aghawadda Gold, Splendid Melody — reportedly a 180,000gns purchase — also started out on the Irish point-to-point circuit.

Splendid Melody was short of a gallop when only seventh behind Hibernian in a well-contested novice hurdle at Newbury and will be a different proposition next time, especially over a distance in excess of two miles.

There are good reports of Melody, another of Stan Clarke's New Zealand imports, who has his first run for Steve Brookshaw in the Stanley Racing Novice Hurdle at Haydock today. But this looks a hot little race with good previous winners Petersen House and Blueshaan in opposition.

Blueshaan, an easy winner from the Brookshaw-trained Lord Richfield at Chepstow in October, was beaten when unsentencing his rider at the same track next time.

An increase in home work between his races did not suit Blueshaan, and we gather Charlie Mann has been easy on him in the

past three weeks. Highly regarded, he should not be written off yet.

Celibate, the stable's smart two-mile chaser, is in good form. He is due to have a race over gallop at Newbury tomorrow with a view to reappearing in next Saturday's Tingle Creek Trophy at Sandown.

Hob Invader is unlikely not to be unbeaten in four starts for Mann. Rated Cheltenham Festival material, he will not be over-raced but is set to have his next run in the Kennel Gate Hurdle at Ascot in three weeks' time.

**Up in class**  
After walking the course at Newbury, Nicky Henderson found conditions ideal for Easter Ross and the Queen Mother will be in attendance to see her five-year-old attempt to follow up his very easy Wincanton success in this afternoon's Gerry Felden Hurdle.

Easter Ross is strongly fancied to cope with this step up in class. Henderson would have preferred softer conditions for Hennessy runner Fiddling The Facts, but the mare has come through her preparation with flying colours.

Look out for the stable's bumper winner Ardennity at Folkestone on Monday — she should be a natural for the mares' only hurdles series later on — while Royal Toast will be worth noting when he embarks on a chasing career.

**Bargain buy**  
Micky Hammond might have struck a bargain when he secured Peradventure for 30,000gns out of Richard Hammon's yard. But for being farmed up early in his career, the three-year-old would have achieved more on the Flat than merely winning a York maiden race in September.

There is nothing wrong with his action now, nor his initial schooling. Peradventure should make a name for himself over hurdles.

Tim Easterby has high hopes for Nicodemus, a four-year-old half-brother to the stable's smart chaser Simply Teaching. He should have no difficulty winning a National Hunt flat race.

**Saturday special**  
**SALAMAH**  
(Newbury 3.20).

## Harris can draw again with Renzo in the Fighting Fifth

**W**ITH doubts about the front runners in the betting, it is a surprise in the Newcastle Fighting Fifth Hurdle today, writes Ron Cox.

Likely favourite Dato Star would prefer much softer ground than he will encounter at Gosforth Park; there has to be a question mark over French Holly, whose stable is struggling to find its form; both City Hall and Midland Legend are expected to need the run and Ballator may not be back to his best just yet.

Renzo (2.30) waltzed in by 10 lengths on his hurdling debut at Ascot last week, underlining the view that he has turned over a new leaf since joining Jimmy Harris's stable.

Renzo never lacked ability on the Flat, and now that his talents have been channelled in the right direction he could take high rank in his new role.

At Haydock



السنة ١٤١٥ هـ

Cricket

Mike Selvey in Perth says the tourists need the mental toughness of a Glenn McGrath to subdue the aggressive Australians

# England tailenders targeted

IF NOT the exact turning-point of the first Test then perhaps its most telling moment came in the morning session of the fourth day immediately after Graham Thorpe had pulled a ball from Glenn McGrath straight to square leg. It brought Dominic Cork to the crease and the Australians, it seems, do not care for him overly. Too cocky, they say, a bit too lippy and ready to dish it out with not that much to back it up.

So McGrath cranked up a gear and began the softening-up process: a couple of bouncers, each accompanied by an extra long follow-through to within earshot and then the steady stream of sly, carping invective. It questioned Cork's heart and cast doubt on his manhood and appetite for the fray. And it struck home.

Instead of steeling himself further, using the physical intimidation and the verbal assault as incentive, Cork became rattled. He had something to prove, he would show McGrath that he could take him on. So when another bounce inevitably came along he found the lure irresistible, carved away and topped a gentle catch to mid-

something short and nasty off to the slips. Once upon a time there was a Fast Bowlers' Union, an unwritten code of conduct which protected the lower order from such atrocities. Not any more, though.

For McGrath, the transition occurred in the Caribbean three years ago when he found himself in the Australia side instead of the injured Craig McDermott. McGrath's contribution was fundamental to his side breaking West Indies' stranglehold in their own country and it centred on his capacity to put the breeze up the Windies tail, an entity that at one and the same time manages to clown around and appear inept while actually gleaming valuable runs.

"I decided to take the battle to their fast bowlers like Ambrose and Walsh," he has recounted, "because I knew from first-hand experience that the tail-enders hate short-pitched stuff more than anyone. I knew they wouldn't like the fear of being hit or picturing the image of themselves hitting the deck. I wanted them to think long and hard about my next delivery. I wanted them to think 'This crazy guy is trying to kill me'."

"You have to go out and take it to them, get aggressive and try and knock them over. The number of runs the tail scores can have a big bearing on the outcome of a match and so that is what I tried to do. This is a mean streak and it's something you need to make it to the top. It was great because Ambrose had not been on the receiving end before and he did not enjoy being targeted for extra attention."

For someone as raw and untutored as McGrath, with an ineptitude with the bat himself to rival anyone in the world, it was a brave bordering on the foolhardy, but it was glorious. Much to his glee, the West Indies tail folded time and again, with Ambrose three times falling to the short ball.

Now, in Perth, with an iron-hard pitch that will probably sound like a dinner gong when the ball lands, the England tail is going to be put through the mince once again, and it simply has to cope better.

Lloyd said: "Peter Philpott, the Aussie who has been coaching leg-spin for us, gave an outsider's observation that 'Brishams'. He thought there was little to choose between the sides, that fielding would be the key and leg-spin would play more of a part as the series went on. But, whereas England were sharp and aggressive at the start, they tailed off while Australia matched that and maintained it throughout."

"Well, we cannot afford to do that, we cannot afford to have people not at the races because frankly that is not good



Max with a mean streak... Glenn McGrath, the Australia fast bowler who refuses to yield an inch

enough. Our top-six batsmen match theirs — we scored 375 before second and the great majority came from the top order — but afterwards we suffer by comparison. "I don't like saying that they should necessarily eke out the runs because that is not what Damien Fleming did. But we do not at the moment have anyone who can help us get 120 from down the

order, which is not unreasonable. So we keep working, reminding them of the responsibility involved in forming partnerships, setting targets, say 40 from No. 8, 30 from No. 9, 20 from No. 10 and 10 from the last man.

## Dropped Fraser philosophical

ANGUS FRASER, as expected, was dropped for the Perth Test but is sympathetic to England's motives. The 33-year-old Middlesex seamer was overlooked because England believe Dean Headley or Alex Tudor can better exploit the fast and bouncy Waca wicket.

"It's totally different than any other surface we are going to come across, so in a way they are exceptional circumstances," said Fraser. England waited until the last minute to make a decision on Graham Thorpe, who has a back problem.

# Our lads still playing in the Gentlemen era

THE lads have been bubbling all week, after our historic draw in the first Test at the Gabba. Getting the result was tremendous but we were also able to take a lot out of the match besides. And I don't just mean the 10 three of excellent, two more of decent and one of the orbital sander I managed to get my hands on while the builders were sheltering from the thunderstorms, although obviously that was a big bonus.

The main lesson we learned from the game was that our batsmen are susceptible to intimidation. Allowing Glenn McGrath to get up the pipes of the lower order, not to mention scorching Athers again, was just plain soft.

It only goes to confirm what Pod's been banging on about for years, and that is that sledging-wise we're still in the Gentlemen vs Fizz era.

I mean, Corky's attempt to keep hitting McGrath for four instead of playing him at his own game was wretched stuff. Until we learn to return abuse with interest we will never see England start to climb up to the higher echelons of the coveted Wisden world rankings.

That's why as soon as we got to the Waca wacs truly was drafted in to run one of my celebrated sledging clinics to bring the lads up to the necessary level of mouthiness to give the Aussies a fright.



no complaints on that score. Quite reasonably, though, we have refused to practise sledging at one another under a floodlight since that was not agreed prior to the start of the tour. The lads have knuckled down well to the rigorous training regimen — with one or two exceptions. Alan Mulally I'm afraid to say can be a right lazy so-and-so, calling McGrath "Fatty" at Brisbane showed a complete lack of concentration and the boy needed a swift kick up the arse to remind him he's sledging for England.

Gus Fraser doesn't need any lessons in patriotism and even though his swearing isn't as sharp as it was he can still keep up a flow of mild invective for hours. Grand servant to the cause that Gus has been over the years, I personally think that now is the ideal time to give the young Surrey quicke Alex Tudor his head. We've got to look to the future. With Channel 4 running things into the next millennium, bad language is going to be an increasingly important aspect of the game.

Right now the world leaders in this field are the South Africans. Their unorthodox sledging methods — singing "Kumbaya" to the incoming batter and asking if he's found the Lord yet — is very off-putting indeed and sends most players scurrying back to join their team-mates in the pavilion rather than sledge.

We'll see over the next few days how the team shape up. Don't forget they'll be sledging into the teeth of the notorious Fremantle Doctor. This is the wind that blows across Perth and is otherwise known as the Fremantle Doctor. It was known as the notorious Fremantle Doctor-Enterologist. And historians will tell you that when Mike Brearley led the side in the Seventies it was known as the notorious Fremantle Doctor-Enterologist. Needless to say, Pod's had not a word of thanks for his efforts this past week. Instead I found myself sitting up all night waiting to watch a fight between some woman boxer and Geoff Boycott. It turned out to be a wind-up from Crofty. Boys was actually doing the commentary on Talk Radio — and he was quite definite that neither of the girls laid a glove on the other.

THE good news is that Jaqqi's due to fly out next week. I can't wait she'll be bringing Christmas fancy-dress party. Which means that when she flies home she'll have plenty of room in the trunk to accommodate all the DIY stuff I acquired at the Gabba.

It's not been finalised yet, what I'll be wearing for the party but I must say the news about the treatment handed out back home to General Augusto Pinochet has set me thinking about some sort of appropriate gesture of support. I've always had a lot of time for "Gus". Say what you like about his politics, the guy could certainly fill a stadium. He was second to none when it came to putting bums on seats, and under them come to that.

## First Test: South Africa v West Indies

# South Africans slip as Walsh takes the mantle

Andy Capostagno in Johannesburg

THE enduring quality of Courtney Walsh carried West Indies to parity at the first Test at the Wanderers. Moreover, it made him his country's leading wicket-taker in Test history.

From 184 overs in three spells, the 36-year-old finished with four for 48 to leave South Africa on 217 for six, 44 runs in arrears. His second wicket — Jacques Kallis, caught brilliantly at second slip by Stuart Williams — took him past Malcolm Marshall's tally of 376 wickets, and he ended the day only four behind Ian Botham in the all-time list that is headed by Kapil Dev (434) from Sir Richard Hadlee (431).

It would be wrong to say that Walsh is getting better as he gets older, for he has always been exceptional. But this year he took 106 wickets in the County Championship at 17.51, and now that he has passed Marshall he will have the incentive to drag his bones around the cricket grounds of the world a while longer yet.

Without him the tourists would have been in a sorry state, having begun the day at 249 for seven and folded within half an hour for 261.

Walsh then ripped through

Adam Becker's defences with a snorter in the fourth over. At the other end Curtly Ambrose was steady when fire and brimstone were needed and Nixon McLean was thumped to the boundary whenever he dropped short, which was frequently.

Lunch was taken at 83 for one with Kallis and Gary Kirsten looking ominous, but Walsh's second wicket not only broke Marshall's record, it went a long way to breaking South Africa's resistance. Kallis had made a studied 53 from 112 balls with eight fours and added 52 with Kirsten.

From there it was all downhill. Daryll Cullinan was caught down the leg side off the face of the bat after hitting two pedigree boundaries, Kirsten, who had held the innings together without ever suggesting permanence, then dragged a ball from McLean on to his off stump looking for his familiar glide behind point. He faced 144 balls in 213 minutes and squeezed out half a dozen boundaries.

McLean had Jonty Rhodes bow for 17 to reduce South Africa to 185 for five, and after a 30-minute break for bad light Walsh delivered the coup de grace by trimming Shaun Pollock's off ball. It was a delightful example of mind over matter as he thrashed life out of the pitch to unsettle the young all-rounder before forcing him to pull at a ball which

he might otherwise have played a straight bat to. Pollock missed, Walsh hit.

The home captain Hansie Cronje is still there on 39 and, on a pitch that is showing signs of subterranean bounce, may consider himself fortunate to have Mark Boucher with him and Pat Symcox to come. The last time Symcox and Boucher batted together at the Wanderers they added 195 for the ninth wicket against Pakistan, a statistic that should convince Brian Lara that there is much work yet to be done.

WEST INDIES

First innings (overnight: 240-7)	29
A McLean c Boucher b Pollock	12
R Kallis c Terbrugge b Donald	5
C Ambrose c Boucher b Pollock	10
C Walsh not out	2
Extras (nb, no, w)	14
Total (37 overs)	281

SOUTH AFRICA

First innings	62
G Kirsten b McLean	6
A Boucher c Boucher b Pollock	5
J Kallis c Williams b Walsh	5
D Cullinan c Boucher b Walsh	5
N Cronje not out	36
R Rhodes b McLean	17
S Pollock b Walsh	11
M Ntshini not out	4
Extras (nb, no, w)	24
Total (for 6, 73.4 overs)	217

Fall of wickets: 10, 102, 111, 164, 185, 220.  
To bat: P Symcox, A Donald, D Terbrugge.  
Bowling: Ambrose 20-4-45-0; Walsh 19-4-46-4; McLean 15-0-30-2; Lewis 19-0-26-0.  
Umpires: D Shepherd and C Mitchell.

## Pakistan pair defy ton-up Streak

HEATH Streak became Zimbabwe's first bowler to 100 Test wickets yesterday but Pakistan reached 272 for six on the first day of the first Test before fading light stopped play in Peshawar with four overs remaining.

Jaz Ahmed's 87 and Yousuf Youhana's 74 not out were the more telling statistics despite the 24-year-old Streak achieving his century of Test wickets in his 25th Test when he had Azhar Mahmood caught behind by Andy Flower for 11. Ahmed hit 38 fours and a six in his 126-ball innings and Youhana's score beat his previous Test best, 64 also against Zimbabwe in March. The pair

shared a 118-run fourth-wicket stand to lift Pakistan from 92 for three before a wicketed pull ended Ahmed's entertaining innings. It was his 11th half-century in 49 Tests and took his tally of runs this season to 367, including two centuries and a half-century, in four innings in three Tests.

Tennis

# Becker plan too radical for ATP Tour

Richard Jago sees a quiet revolution in the professional game taking shape

BORIS BECKER has had the door shut in his face. This week's agreement between the ATP Tour and the directors of the Super Nine tournament has ended the former Wimbledon champion's immediate hopes of gaining control of the tour and of directing the tennis revolution which he believes is overdue.

But although Becker may have failed he has certainly made a difference. His behind-the-scenes manoeuvring has influenced both the dramatic new look which the tour will certainly have from the year 2000 onwards and the atmosphere in which it is being created.

For about the past month the game has been alive with rumours of Becker's secret meeting with the motor racing mogul Bernie Ecclestone, of \$100 million (£80 million) being invested in a break-away elite circuit, and of a Formula One-style world rankings race which might make tennis more attractive to the ordinary punter.

All this led to an agreement on the projected ATP Tour/Super Nines being brought forward, for fear that some of the tournament directors might switch to join the revolutionaries. More significantly it has helped make the directors realise just what riches they have in their possession.

Mark Miles has long been trying to persuade them how much might be gained by pooling their resources. Ironically the Becker/Ecclestone/Prisma agency grouping, by revealing how much it was worth as it attempted a buy-out of the directors, has enabled the ATP Tour chief executive to succeed.

Taking into account international television rights, advertising and international sponsorship, the combined value of what the Super Nines will eventually invest in a holding company is probably around \$100 million — almost exactly the sum Becker, Ecclestone and Prisma were offering for the tour.

The triumvirate's plan was to create a brighter shop window by reducing the number of events to ensure all the leading players played one another more regularly, and having off the elite tournaments into a super series.

This gained a positive response from, among others, Pete Sampras because much of it met an obvious need: the TV ratings are down for the men's tour at the same time as those for the women's game are not only at record levels but also, for the first

time in Grand Slam history, higher than the men's.

This has been accompanied by a fear that many fans have no clear idea what the ATP Tour really is, and by a belief that plans for the year 2000 onwards somehow ought to be revolutionary.

Instead there is a victory for reform. But don't doubt that the changes will be the most significant in a quarter of a century. Crucially the Super Nines have agreed with the ATP Tour to impose a mandatory commitment upon leading players, who will now be entered automatically in these tournaments.

Although the four Grand Slam tournaments, which operate independently, will not do this, their combined committee has agreed that points from the Australian, French and US Opens and Wimbledon will count automatically towards the world rankings.

This goes a long way towards creating an identifiable super series of 13 tournaments, and is good news for Wimbledon because the armada of Spaniards who avoid

It is feared that many fans have no clear idea of what the ATP Tour is all about

competing on grass are now less likely to stay away. The ATP Tour reforms will also involve a buy-back system, compensating directors for the purchase of their tournaments.

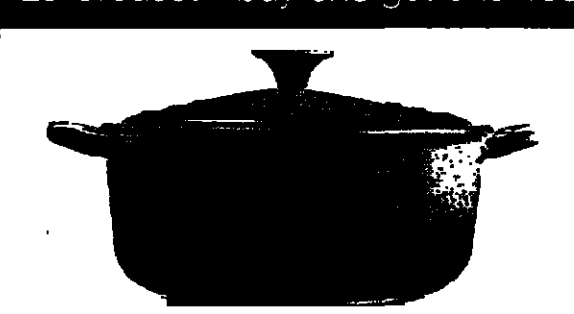
The proposed new world ranking, based on a Formula One race from a zero start, is comparable to the Ecclestone notion. Hailed as the simpler system needed to make tennis into an exciting year-long race, it nevertheless runs the risk of absurdities. Used in the early weeks of this year, for instance, it would have thrown up as the No. 1 a then unknown Australian schoolboy, Lleyton Hewitt.

Tim Henman is not alone in thinking the old system, a moving window based on the previous 12 months' results, needed only to be better explained rather than replaced.

However, it adds up to much more for ISI and Octagon, the companies now assembling and selling the ATP Tour's rights, to work with. Maybe too much more.

It should make for a brighter, less confusing, better presented and perhaps more popular sport. But it will also mean more money for those players already awash with it, and more of some of the madnesses which flow from it.

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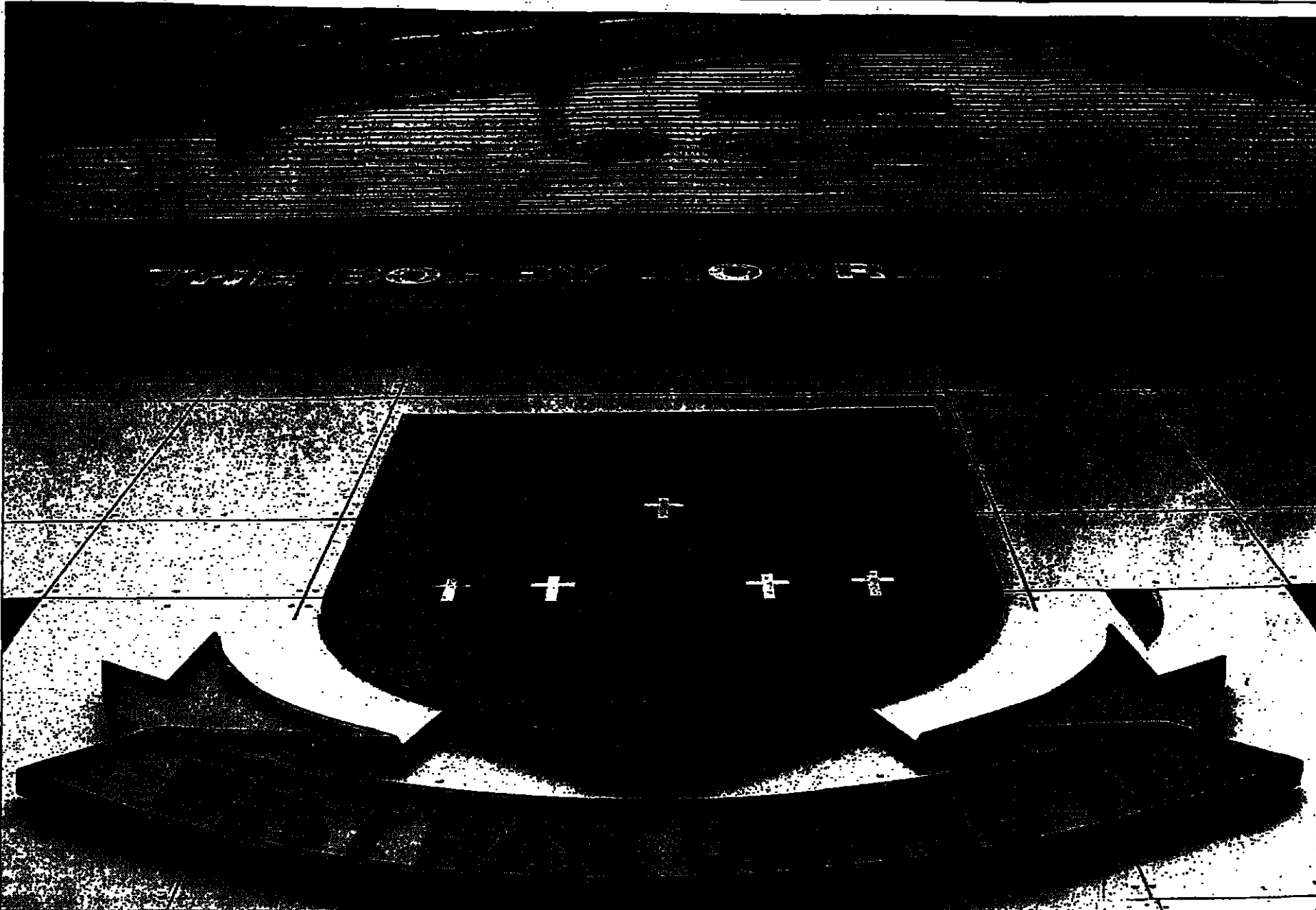
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## Any old Iron won't do for Harry

Martin Thorpe and Hugh Southon on the West Ham manager's battle to keep his top players

**H**ARRY Redknapp's highly mobile features twisted into a shocked expression of disbelief as he sat down at Wembley just over a week ago alongside his wife Sandra and the West Ham chief executive Peter Storrie.

The Hammers manager was looking forward to watching one of his shrewdest buys, Ian Wright, and one of his brightest talents, Rio Ferdinand, playing for England against the Czech Republic.

It should have been an evening of intense personal satisfaction, but the West Ham manager was not allowed to enjoy it. Instead he was forced to listen to Storrie's demand that Andrew Impey be sold.

The war of words was still raging when the Sky TV producer trained his camera on the tortured threesome, giving the public a rare glimpse into the private stresses which daily run through the east London club and will eventually shape its future.

By Sunday, when Storrie pulled Impey out of the West Ham side for the game at Derby pending the player's £1.5 million move to Leicester, Redknapp was not a happy Harry.

Though acknowledging that West Ham had to sell someone to balance the books by the end of November, Redknapp had been working on deals to offload players more on the fringe, such as the striker Sami Al-Samir, for £200,000 to Hearts or Bradford, and the defender Tim Breacker to QPR. But nothing came of these negotiations so Storrie, under pressure from the board and with time running out, was forced to act on the offer for Impey.

In a very public outburst, Redknapp snapped that it was the manager's job to choose which players were sold. But something else spilled from his diatribe which touched on larger fears. "The way things are going," he said, "someone will try to sell Rio Ferdinand next."

Storrie and the board quickly moved to reassure Redknapp that Impey was not the thin edge of the selling wedge at a club whose limited finances make cashing in on players such a temptation.

And the very next day the board passed the credibility test when they backed Redknapp's decision to turn down Tottenham's £4.2 million bid for Frank Lampard Jr.

For now Redknapp's voice has been heard. But Spurs has assembled for about £15 million a squad now worth around three times that, and he has got them playing so well that they are currently a nose-bleeding sixth in the Premiership.

But, because of the club's very nature, West Ham's finances are tight. Apart from the £2 million he paid to buy a majority stake in the club, the chairman Terrence Brown

has not invested any of his own money. There is no sugar-daddy.

West Ham's income is derived basically from television money, corporate deals, loans and gate receipts, although those are restricted by Upton Park's capacity of 26,000.

The downturn in football share values put West Ham off the idea of flotation. So, with the board's policy of restricting their debts, exemplified by their determination to balance the books with the Impey deal, the question is:

Where can new money be found?

One area which they have not fully exploited is the commercial side. "They could make a lot more money if they did," says the football analyst Alex Fynn. "They have a particular advantage of a very loyal fan base and they haven't really marketed to them."

Pending that, however, is it any wonder that Redknapp fears the board will turn to the team in an attempt to raise revenue? The club are currently developing plans to rebuild the main stand at Upton Park to increase the ground capacity by 10,000 and boost gate receipts.

Peter Cullen is a West Ham shareholder and a season-ticket-holder for the past 27 years. And he, for one, wonders where the money will come from for such development work. "Selling one big star could finance that whole plan, so you can see the temptation for the board. The test will be to find the money to build the new stand without selling players, so the team can go forward not backwards."

"When supporters heard this Impey story most thought, okay, he's not that popular anyway. But if Rio or Lampard or Harrison or Sinclair went, then they would worry that the team Harry Redknapp has done so well to build would collapse. For instance, if Lampard got sold, Rio's his best mate. He might think West Ham are not ambitious."

"What I would say to Terrence Brown is, 'You've done a good job so far, I hope you can find the money without weakening the team'. But watch this space."

cheque-book would offer him an enticing way out.

Redknapp has much to be proud of. Through exhaustive wheeling and dealing he has assembled for about £15 million a squad now worth around three times that, and he has got them playing so well that they are currently a nose-bleeding sixth in the Premiership.

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### Football

Nationwide preview

## Evers keen to cap big week for Hatters

Marcus Lee on a tall order for Luton's rising young midfielder

**A** YEAR ago Sean Evers was one of a multitude of midfielders playing in the Avon Insurance Combination and hoping to break into the Luton Town side. Over the next eight days he may become a Worthington Cup semi-finalist, help his team into the third round of the FA Cup and also press home their claims for a return to the First Division.

Some progress for a 21-year-old from the unlikely footballing hotbed of Hitchin. On Wednesday evening Evers confirmed he was one of England's better prospects with a goal which maintained the Nationwide League's unbeaten record against their Serie B counterparts, opening the scoring in a 1-1 draw in Telford.

Down at Kenilworth Road, Evers is just one of a crop of home-grown talents honed by the coach John Moore and the rest of the manager Lennie Lawrence's staff into a low-cost team capable of living with the rich kids.

Understandably Evers is shocked at his rapid rise to prominence but he is aware of his potential. Aware enough to turn down an Under-21 call-up by the Republic of Ireland manager Mick McCarthy last season. "I can't believe how fast things have happened," said Evers. "My first priority is to play well for Luton and I try not to think about any speculation because it's not worth it. I was flattered by Mick's approach last season but it has always been my dream to play for England."

But international aspirations aside, the 21-year-old will be a key figure for Luton as they face one of the biggest weeks in their recent history. Today they take on Manchester City at Kenilworth Road, with both teams hoping to reduce the 12-point gap with the leaders Stoke City, before taking on Sunderland at the Stadium of Light on Tuesday and rounding it all off with an FA Cup second-round tie at home to Hull City next Saturday.

The cash-strapped club, who are still reeling from the rejection of their proposals for a new stadium, the Koberlode, by the Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott, know that the significance of this week goes beyond the results. It may be crucial to the club's very survival.

"The Koberlode decision was a massive blow and if we can get into the semi-finals of the Worthington Cup then it will make the club financially secure for the next two years," said Evers. "The game against Sunderland is going to be something else. There will be 40,000 people screaming at us and it will be how we react to it, but I honestly believe we have a chance."

Lawrence agrees with the midfielder. "It's a huge seven days. We really need to succeed in all three competitions. We must stay in touch with the top two in the league while three or four talents in the FA Cup could bring in money, and after all money is what we need at this club."

In the First Division, top-of-the-table Sunderland travel to fourth-place Sheffield United in what promises to be the game of the day, as the Blades have been defeated only once at Bramall Lane this season.

With Watford's manager Graham Taylor still recovering from a throat abscess, the coach Kenny Jackett takes charge of an in-form team at Crystal Palace in a meeting of two former England managers' sides. Terry Venables' Palace will be without the suspended Hayden Mullins, and Matt Jansen is still out after a knee operation.

Peterborough United visit second-placed Scunthorpe in the Third Division with the striker Leon McKenzie making his first appearance for the visitors after cutting short a two-month loan spell at Ipswich. The Posh midfielder Matthew Gill is still missing with a knee injury but Des Linton and Steve Castle hope to be fit.

happened behind us, and Paolo more than anybody wants that to happen. He was given a good reception by everyone. He's come back into the fold and what we will do is close ranks around him and help him out as much as possible."

Portsmouth have been forced to turn to the Professional Footballers' Association for a loan to pay their wages this month. It emerged last night. The First Division club, who announced in their last published accounts debts of £3.5 million, have taken an advance from the footballers' union because of money troubles at Fratton Park.

A PFA spokesman, Brandon Batson, confirmed that the union had agreed to give Portsmouth a loan as an advance on their regular Football League payments, but that they had not agreed to bail them out of short-term financial problems.

dropping their first points at Cannock last week. Some Singh, who might have been vulnerable against Canterbury's pack attack because he is not fully fit, is rested. Canterbury have never won at Southgate but fancy their chances this time.

Cannock, who may head the table if the top two draw, should be confident of scoring plenty of goals. They visit East Grinstead, who in the absence of injured England goalkeeper David Luckes are shipping a lot of goals.

them to make inroads into Ipswich's six-point lead. But without their stars, Slough may find that gap still fairly wide as the league reaches its winter break.

Ipswich, who are without Lucy Youngs through flu, go to Henley-in-Arden to play Olton, the one side to take a point off them this season.

Canterbury and Southgate, the top two in the men's league, meet at Trent Park tomorrow after the Slough-Doncaster match. The home side make one change after

to allow; Juno (R. equivalent to Creek guides); 7. Berries Logan (film director off; Straw (MP for); Black (Death); Blue (Kind of R. M. Davis album); 8. 350 (Squadron) 617 plus 248 (number of, according to de G.) plus 87 ("Four score and seven years ago"; 1001 (nights) less 14 (lines to a sonnet) less 37 (number of plays; (composer of Rost) 66 times 15 (in snooker), less 40 (years in); 9. Hams Bayonne (Bayonet derives from); (now called) York; Porina (porcelain derives from); West (Ham, ground); 10. First name Alfred. A.E. Hilsman (in poem by); A. Alisair Cooke; A. Lord Tennyson (poem by); philosopher A.J. Ayer (work by).

1. Myanmar (Burma). Official name of Rangoon.

2. The Tolpuddle Martyrs.

3. Sepin.

4. Guides.

5. 960.

6. Day Normandy beaches.

7. Sword (type of); Omaha (largest town); Gold (symbol); Utah (used

### Cycling

## Threat of Olympic exclusion to aid fight against drug use

William Fotheringham

**I**F CYCLING does not adhere to new anti-doping rules proposed by the International Olympic Committee, it may be thrown out of the Olympic Games. That was the stark message, according to sources, at a meeting in Lausanne yesterday which discussed the agenda for January's world conference, called in response to this year's drug scandals in the Tour de France and problems in leading Olympic sports such as swimming and athletics.

Top cycling officials including Hein Verbruggen, head of the Union Cycliste Internationale, the world governing body, have been adamant that cycling cannot afford to be tough on drug cheats because competitors may sue for loss of earnings. But this argument is apparently not acceptable to the IOC.

"There are threats," said a leading IOC official. "But an obligation is obviously implied and if you are not meeting it you are not part of the Olympic movement."

The meeting supported two-year bans for any athletes found taking steroids or hormones. Verbruggen, however,

recently backed a UCI decision to impose bans of seven months on three Swiss cyclists who confessed to using the banned hormone erythropoietin. The UCI has said that if it attempts to impose longer bans it might be in danger of going bankrupt.

The union is clearly split. Yesterday Verbruggen sent out a seven-page letter in response to criticism from his vice-president, the Frenchman Daniel Beal, that he and the UCI had not moved far or fast enough on this issue.

On Thursday Bruno Rousset, the disgraced manager of the Festina team which was thrown out of the Tour de France over doping allegations, blamed the UCI and the French Cycling Federation — of which Beal is the head — for the systematic use of drugs in cycling.

Three Festina cyclists, Richard Virenque, Pascal Hervé and the 1997 world champion Laurent Brochard, have been summoned to appear before the investigating magistrate in Lille on Tuesday, and the cyclists at the centre of the other scandal, the members of the TVM team, will be questioned again by magistrates in Reims at the end of the week.

### Snooker

## Harold lands telling punches but Stevens hits back to draw level

Clive Everton

in Bournemouth

**M**ATTHEW STEVENS, the 21-year-old Welshman who reached two ranking semi-finals and the world quarter-finals last season, finished his afternoon session against Dave Harold, a semi-finalist at last month's Grand Prix at Preston, at 4-4 in their best-of-17-frames semi-final of the UK Championship.

Assisted by a break of 86, Stevens led 3-1 but was frozen out of the next three frames in which the meticulous Harold, who has won 16 of his 18 matches this season, landed telling punches of 49, 46, 52 and 97 to lead 4-2.

When Stevens, highly talented but inclined to be over-eager, missed carelessly on 52-0 in the seventh, Harold had a fleeting chance to go 5-2 ahead but it was the young Welshman who secured that frame and the last of the session to achieve parity at 4-4.

In the previous round Stevens recovered from 5-3 down to beat Matthew Couch 9-5 and he is striving to reach the first ranking

final of his career. A new name will be engraved on the trophy, whoever wins tomorrow night.

The semi-finalists are playing for big money. Already guaranteed £15,750, that will rise to £39,000 for the runner-up and £75,000 for the champion.

John Higgins continues his attempt to complete a world and UK title double, previously achieved only by Steve Davis. John Parrott and Stephen Hendry, when he plays Paul Hunter in the other semi-final today.

Mike Russell, who lost his world billiards title to Geet Sethi in Ahmedabad in September but who won last week's Riley Northern Open at Middlesbrough, set a world record, under current rules, with a break of 87 in beating Sethi 2204-807 to win the UK Billiards Championship in Harrogate.

These rules are the most stringent under which billiards has ever been played as the cue ball must cross into ban — the line containing the yellow, green and brown spots in snooker — in the last 20 points of every 100 in a break.

### Hockey

## Double-header to test injury-hit Slough's title ambitions

Pat Rowley

**J**UST when Slough Ladies could have done with a full squad they face a double-header this weekend in the Women's English League without their two most influential players, the experienced internationals Karen Brown and Sarah Killeher.

Brown has been told to rest for at least a fortnight after suffering concussion from a bang on the head during the 2-1 defeat by Ipswich last

week, and Killeher has to return home for the Irish Inter-provincial, a selection trial.

And Slough may be even further weakened, England's Mandy Nicholson (back injury) and Jane Smith (flu) missing training on Thursday.

Normally Slough, who have not lost at home for two seasons, could expect to rake in six points from their home games against Leicester, at High Wycombe, and Doncaster, at Southgate's Trent Park tomorrow. That would enable

them to make inroads into Ips

# Weekend Sport

Saturday November 28 1998 www.footballunlimited.co.uk

## Abject Henman happy to play second fiddle



Shaken but not stirred... Tim Henman, right, congratulates Greg Rusedski after the British No. 2's straight-sets victory completed in 64 minutes

PHOTOGRAPH BY GARY M. PROIR

## Ruthless Rusedski wins brief battle of the Britons

Stephen Bierley sees the Hanover crowd upset by disguised expediency at the ATP World Finals

IT WAS probably never realistic, given that Tim Henman had already qualified for today's semi-finals of the ATP Tour Championship Finals, that yesterday's all-British encounter with Greg Rusedski was going to hit the heights, but nobody, least of all the near-capacity crowd, expected the British No. 1 to perform quite so abjectly, Rusedski winning 6-2, 6-4.

No amount of post-match apologies, which were profuse, could disguise the fact that this was a performance born out of expediency. Had Henman's first serves, ground strokes and volleys hit their target from the start it might have been a competitive match. But once his initial efforts failed so miserably there was absolutely no imperative to raise his game again, save briefly when the crowd got on his back in the second set.

David Felgate, his coach, usually sits like a coiled spring when watching his man. On this occasion his arms were folded and his posture upright. He may not have liked what he saw but he

knew that defeat would have no bearing on this afternoon's match against Carlos Moya of Spain, who had earlier secured his place in the last four, for the second successive year, with a 7-5, 7-5 victory over Russia's Yevgeny Kafelnikov.

Not surprisingly, for such is the one-eyed nature of sport, Rusedski felt he had found the form he displayed when defeating Pete Sampras in the final of the Paris Indoor Open this month. No way.

Rusedski was delighted with the win, his second in succession over Henman, for it secured his place in the world's top 10 for a second successive year. But Henman was so poor that the British No. 2 would do little more than keep the ball in play to secure the victory.

Much had been written about their rivalry, the true nature of which will doubtless be more credibly tested as next year unfolds. This was not a contest in any meaningful sense. "I think Greg had a lot to play for and his performance showed it," said Henman, without quite being able

to admit that the opposite was also true: that he himself had nothing to play for and it showed most horribly.

A couple of weeks ago, having clinched his place at this tournament on a Friday in Stockholm, Henman lost in similar fashion to Todd Martin of the United States, his game disintegrating through lack of motivation.

To a large extent he has always been a big occasion player, his career being littered with defeats against lower-ranked players, and there is no doubt he will totally wilt for the Moya match. They have met on four previous occasions, with Henman winning all but one. "It's going to be a very similar to the Corretja match. Carlos is going to try to keep me on the baseline as much as possible and I'm going to be getting to the net at every opportunity," said the Briton, who defeated Alex Corretja 7-6, 6-7, 6-2 in his second round-robin match, having initially beaten Chile's Marcelo Rios.

"I think the court here suits me very well and I feel confident with his style of play matching up against mine," Henman added, though conceding that his performance against Rusedski may have lifted the Spaniard's confidence. In sharp contrast to the all-British match, Moya's victory against Kafelnikov, a winner-take-all battle, was as tense and thrilling as the former was flaccid. Moya seized the early initiative for a 3-1 first-set lead, only to throw it away. Breaks of serve became the rule before the 22-year-old Spaniard managed to save two break points and hold his serve. The tennis argument

### Henman v Rusedski

November 1998  
First British National Championships, Telford (hard court)  
Henman wins 1-6, 6-3, 6-2

October 1996  
Last 16, Czech Indoor Open, Opatowitz (carpet)  
Henman wins 7-6, 7-6, 7-6

November 1996  
First British National Championships, Telford (hard court)  
Henman wins 6-7, 7-6, 6-4

October 1997  
Semi-final, CA Trophy, Vienna (carpet)  
Henman wins 6-4, 6-4

November 1998  
Qualifying stage, ATP Tour Championships, Hanover (carpet)  
Rusedski wins 6-2, 6-4



had been fascinating but not conclusive, with Kafelnikov, who defeated Moya in last year's semi-final before losing to Sampras, threatening to shoot him down in the second set.

Significantly Moya began to serve with more resolve, crucially in the 10th game when at 0-30 down, he produced four first serves of exceptional quality. Kafelnikov's resolution wavered and a final weary backhand return into the net saw Moya leap with delight. "It's going to be difficult to beat Tim. He's aggressive and doesn't give you any rhythm," he said.

Rusedski's win gave him a slim hope of meeting Sampras in the other semi. All he needed was for Albert Costa, another reserve, to beat his compatriot Corretja. Some chance. Costa has never won an indoor match. Had he done so here he might never have got back into Spain. Corretja duly won 6-2, 6-4. So Corretja will play Sampras later today, their last epic meeting being in the 1996 US Open quarter-final when Sampras, virtually out on his feet, won 7-6 in the fifth set.

## Wolves make Lee long-term boss

Peter White

WOLVERHAMPTON Wanderers will today give Colin Lee the manager's job for the season, before tomorrow's First Division meeting with their Black Country neighbours West Bromwich Albion.

Since his caretaker appointment three weeks ago when Mark McGhee was dismissed, Lee, 44, has guided Wolves to three wins and a draw in four games, elevating them from 12th to fifth in the table. He has now been given the post full-time until the end of the season, when the situation will again be reviewed.

Wolves' managing director John Richards said: "Colin had made it clear he would welcome an opportunity in management, and undoubtedly over the past couple of weeks he has given Wolves his total commitment in difficult circumstances."

The victory over their Midlands neighbours Birmingham City last weekend swung the pendulum further in Lee's favour, and a further indication that the Molineux directors were

happy with him came when they allowed him to spend £300,000 to sign the midfielder Robert Niestroj from Fortuna Dusseldorf of Germany. It is thought he was informed of the board's decision after transatlantic talks last night between Richards and the chairman Sir Jack Hayward, who has returned to his home in the Bahamas.

Lee accepted the immensity of the task by saying: "I know there are going to be some rough and tough times in the weeks that lie ahead."

Southampton have called off the signing of Joey Beauchamp from Oxford United after failing to agree personal terms with the former West Ham and Swindon winger.

Beauchamp looked set to join the Saints after a medical but their manager Dave Jones said there were "too many complications with everything involved about the transfer".

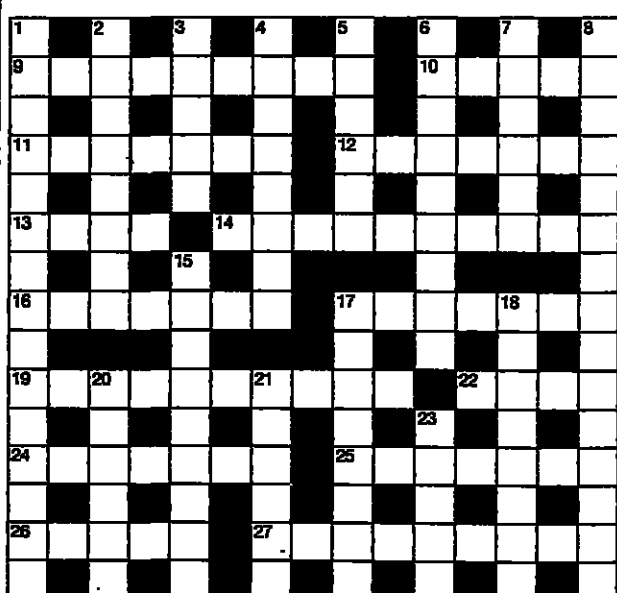
The German FA yesterday formally confirmed its interest in staging the 2006 World Cup when the vice-president Franz Beckenbauer submitted a bid to the Fifa president Sepp Blatter in Zurich.

## Guardian COLLINS Prize Crossword 21,444

A copy of the new Millennium edition of the Collins English Dictionary will be sent to the first five correct entries drawn.

Entries to The Guardian Crossword, P.O. Box 6608, Birmingham, B26 3PR, or Fax to 0171 713 4735 by first post on Friday. Solution and winners in the Guardian on Monday December 7.

Name  
Address



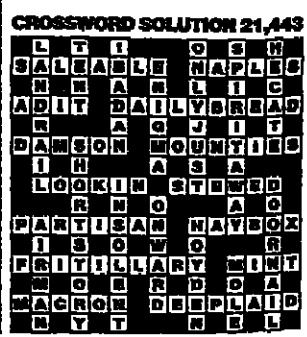
Set by Pasquale

### Across

- 9 A magical power getting hold of man - Hollywood stuff (9)
- 10 Piece of armour is hard, copper-plated (5)
- 11 Spot document containing truth in short supply (7)
- 12 Affair in a hut? (7)
- 13 One of 23's trio with combined fibres around (4)
- 14 Tattered blue coat contains war medal, convertible into money (10)
- 15 Ornament from Britain wrapped in fabrics oriental (7)
- 17 Leave party clutching record and brood? (7)
- 19 Babe's intoxicated with lover, that's evident (10)
- 22 Food shop that sounds capital (4)
- 24 Possibly the output from 5 characters (7)
- 25 Performer offering rubbish mostly at end of West Street (7)
- 26 Good bar was legendary for the wine it had (5)
- 27 Article is rewritten to be made down-to-earth (8)

### Down

- 1 Golden eagle, calm when flying around 23's educational establishment (8,7)
- 2 Loud little man sinking into deckchair, perhaps, somewhere along the coast (3,5)



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## High-flying Roma is to snap up lowly Nice for £2m

ROMA, currently second in Serie A and recent conquerors of the UEFA Cup, are about to purchase the struggling French Second Division club Nice for about £2 million.

The deal will be signed on Monday and two Roma players are expected to link up with the Nice squad, although the Serie A club are at pains to point out that no changes are planned for the Nice coaching staff.

Roma have surpassed most expectations this season and tomorrow face the much vaunted but ninth-placed Lazio, their co-tenants at the Stadio Olimpico, with a 100 per cent home record although for this fixture they are technically the away team.

## Performance of the week



Dwight Yorke (Manchester United) who led his team's revival against Barcelona so effectively in Wednesday's Champions League thriller at Nou Camp.

## AN Other

This much-travelled Cheshire-born striker could hardly be described as a wanderer but he did achieve a kind of fame through his consistent scoring record and innate professionalism. His career began in pale blue surroundings, then he spent five years among the reds before joining Leeds. A brief period among the blues was followed by one last spell in the saddle. Last week: Tony Woodcock (Nottingham Forest, Cologne, Arsenal, Cologne).

## Batty's transfer stalled

Michael Walker

THE proposed £5 million transfer of David Batty from Newcastle United to Leeds United, seemingly progressing smoothly yesterday morning, appeared to have hit turbulence last night when Rudd Gullit indicated he would prefer a player exchange rather than simply take the cash on offer.

Gullit badly needs a strong central defender and the Leeds captain Lucas Radebe is believed to be his target. Leeds, however, are in the process of negotiating a new four-year contract with Radebe that would make him the highest paid player in the club's history. Their manager David O'Leary has said Radebe would only leave Leeds "over my dead body", so a swap in-

volving Batty and him is unlikely. According to Gullit, Newcastle have not formally accepted Leeds's offer for Batty, who trained with Newcastle's reserves yesterday, and the Dutchman may feel inclined to leave him there until Leeds are prepared to renegotiate.

"This is not all about money," Gullit said. "It's about players. You can have the money but not be able to spend it. I think Leeds want something off us and we will see what we can get off them."

The board has been in touch with Leeds but it depends on what we can do. Having submitted a written transfer request yesterday morning, Batty strode out of Newcastle's training ground at lunchtime carrying a few personal possessions and as usual saying nothing.

His agent Hayden Evans was more forthcoming, saying it is "David's desire" to rejoin Leeds. The Yorkshire club offered £5 million for him six weeks ago and despite the Newcastle chairman Freddy Shepherd saying "There is no chance of David Batty leaving St James' Park", the player's demeanour since has suggested he is keen to move.

According to Gullit, this has been "in the air" since the summer, even though Batty signed a new five-year deal last season.

The decisive moment came two weeks ago when Gullit dropped Batty against Sheffield Wednesday, only to bring him on after 36 minutes for Dietmar Hamann. Afterwards Gullit said Batty had proved "he must be in the team", but his intention of "making Batty feel part of it" did not work.